THE ADVENT

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The Advent

Among human beings, the most widely spread disease is mental narrowness. They understand only what is in their own consciousness and cannot tolerate anything else.

THE MOTHER

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CONTENTS

		Page
EDITORIALS:	—*Nolini Kanta Gupta*	
MUSIC—ITS ORIGIN AND NATURE		... 201
INDIAN AND EUROPEAN MUSIC		... 204
THIS UGLINESS IN THE WORLD		... 205
THE DIVINE TRUTH—ITS NAME AND FORM		... 207
THE DEATH OF A GOD (Poem)	—*Sri Aurobindo*	... 209
HYMN TO INDRA	—*Sri Aurobindo*	... 210
THOUGHTS AND GLIMPSES (New Series)	—*Sri Aurobindo*	... 212
THE YOGA OF INTEGRAL KNOWLEDGE CHAPTER I	—*Sri Aurobindo*	... 215
THE INTEGRAL AUTONOMY OF BEING	—*Rishabhchand*	... 226
CONSCIOUSNESS AND REALITY	—*Nathaniel Pearson*	... 234
SOCIAL TENSIONS AND CONFLICTS	—*Indra Sen*	... 243
POETIC INSPIRATION	—*Late Jagadish Saran*	... 245
REVIEW: JAPASUTRAM	—*AB*	... 251

To believe or not to believe in the possibility of avatarhood can make no difference to the bare fact. If God chooses to manifest in a human body I do not see how any human thought, approval or disapproval can affect in the least His decision; and if He takes birth in a body, the denial of men cannot prevent the fact from being a fact, and if He decides not to incarnate in a human body, the faith, certitude and belief of all humanity cannot in the least alter the fact that He is not incarnate. So I do not see what is there to get excited about. It is only in perfect quietness and silence, free from all prejudices and preferences, that the consciousness can perceive the truth.

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The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIALS*

MUSIC—ITS ORIGIN AND NATURE

MUSIC, you must remember, like any other art, is a means for expressing something—some idea, some feeling, some emotion, a certain aspiration and so on. There is even a domain where all these movements exist and from where they are brought down under a musical form. A good composer with some inspiration would produce good music; he is then called a good musician. A bad musician can have also a good inspiration, he can receive something from the higher domain, but possessing no musical capacity, he would produce only what is very commonplace, very ordinary and uninteresting. However, if you go beyond, precisely over to this place where lies the origin of music, get to the idea, the emotion, the inspiration behind, you can then taste of these things without being stopped by the form. Still this musical form can be joined on to what is behind or beyond the form; for it is that which originally inspired

* Based on Talks of the Mother

the musician to compose. Of course, there are instances where no inspiration exists, where the source is only a kind of sound mechanics, which is not, in any case, always interesting. What I mean is this that there is an inner state in which the outer form is not the most important thing: there lies the origin of music, the inspiration that is beyond. It is trite to say, but one often forgets that it is not sound that makes music, the sound has to express something.

There is a music that is quite mechanical and has no inspiration. There are musicians who play with great virtuosity, that is to say, they have mastered the technique and execute faultlessly the most complicated and rapid movements. It is music perhaps, but it expresses nothing; it is like a machine. It is clever, there is much skill, but it is uninteresting, soulless. The most important thing, not only in music, but in all human creations, in all that man does even, is, I repeat, the inspiration behind. The execution naturally is expected to be on a par with the inspiration; but to express truly well, one must have truly great things to express. It is not to say that technique is not necessary; on the contrary, one must possess a very good technique; it is even indispensable. Only it is not the one thing indispensable, nor is it as important as the inspiration. For the essential quality of music comes from the region where it has its source.

Source or origin means the thing without which an object would not exist. Nothing can manifest upon earth physically unless it has its source in a higher truth. Thus material existence has its source and inspiration in the vital, the vital in its turn has behind it the mental, the mental has the overmental and so on. If the universe were a flat object, having its origin in itself, it would quickly cease to exist. (That is perhaps what Science means when it postulates the impossibility of perpetual motion). It is because there is a higher source which inspires it, a secret energy that drives it towards manifestation that Life continues: otherwise it would exhaust itself very soon.

There is a graded scale in the source of music. A whole category of music is there that comes from the higher vital, for example: it is very catching, perhaps even a little vulgar, something that twines round your nerves, as it were, and twists them. It catches you somewhere about your loins—navel centre—and charms you in its way. As there is a vital music there is also what can be called psychic music coming from quite a different source; there is further a music which has spiritual origin. In its own region this higher music is very magnificent; it seizes you deeply and carries

you away somewhere else. But if you were to express it perfectly—execute it—you would have to pass this music too through the vital. Your music coming from high may nevertheless fall absolutely flat in the execution, if you do not have that intensity of vital vibration which alone can give it its power and splendour. I knew people who had very high inspiration, but their music turned to be quite commonplace, because their vital did not move. Their spiritual practice put their vital almost completely to sleep; yes, it was literally asleep and did not work at all. Their music thus came straight into the physical. If you could get behind and catch the source, you would see that there was really something marvellous even there, although externally it was not forceful or effective. What came out was a poor little melody, very thin, having nothing of the power of harmony which is there when one can bring into play the vital energy. If one could put all this power of vibration that belongs to the vital into the music of higher origin we would have the music of a genius. Indeed, for music and for all artistic creation, in fact, for literature, for poetry, for painting etc. an intermediary is needed. Whatever one does in these domains depends doubtless for its intrinsic value upon the source of the inspiration, upon the plane or the height where one stands. But the value of the execution depends upon the strength of the vital that expresses the inspiration. For a complete genius both are necessary. The combination is rare, generally it is the one or the other, more often it is the vital that predominates and overshadows.

When the vital only is there, you have the music of *café concert* and cinema. It is extraordinarily clever and at the same time extraordinarily commonplace, even vulgar. Since, however, it is so clever, it catches hold of your brain, haunts your memory, rings in (or wrings) your nerves; it becomes so difficult to get rid of its influence, precisely because it is done so well, so cleverly. It is made vitally with vital vibrations, but what is behind is not, to say the least, wholesome. Now imagine the same vital power of expression joined to the inspiration coming from above, say, the highest possible inspiration when the entire heaven seems to open out, then it is music indeed! Some things in César Franck, some in Beethoven, some in Bach, some in some others possess this sovereignty. But after all it is only a moment, it comes for a moment and does not abide. There is no artist whose whole work is executed at such a pitch. The inspiration comes like a flash of lightning, most often it lasts just long enough to be grasped and held in a few snatches.

Something similar to that experience may happen to you when your consciousness is all attentive and concentrated; you feel suddenly that you are being carried aloft, that all your energies are gathered and lifted up, as if your head has opened out and you are thrown into the free air, into the far spaces of extraordinary heights and magnificent lights. The experience gives you in a few seconds what one may in the normal course of things achieve after many years of difficult yoga. Only immediately after the experience you drop down below upon the earth, because the basis has not been built; even you may begin to doubt whether you had really the experience. Still the consciousness has been prepared, something definitive has been done and remains.

INDIAN AND EUROPEAN MUSIC

The difference is both in regard to the source and the expression and in an inverse way. In European music a very high—spiritual—inspiration is a rare thing. The psychic source also is very rare. But if at all it is a very high spiritual source or otherwise it is the vital that is the source. The expression is always there, apart from some exceptions naturally; but it is almost always vital, because the source is very often purely vital. At times, as I said, it comes from high above, then it is really marvellous. At times, more rarely, it is psychic: something of it was in the religious music, but it is not frequent. Indian music, on the other hand, almost always, that is to say, when we have good musicians, has a psychic source, the source, for example, of the Ragas. It does not come from the top heights, it has rather an inner and intimate origin. But it has very rarely a sufficient vital body. I have heard a good deal of Indian music, quite a good deal indeed. I came across very rarely any that has a great vital force, not more than four or five times. But I have heard oftener that with a psychic inspiration behind. It is a music directly translated from the inner into the physical. To listen you must concentrate, as it is something very thin, very fine and tenuous, having nothing of the vital vibration with its strong intense resonances. You can glide into it, let yourself be carried along the flow, entering the psychic source. It has that effect, it acts something like an intoxication, something that takes you into a kind of trance. If you listen well and are attentive and let yourself go, you slowly glide and dip dip into the psychic consciousness; but if you remain in the external consciousness, such a thin stream expresses itself there that the vital gives no

response and finds it extremely flat and monotonous. If, however, along with the psychic vibration there were also a vital force expressing it, the result would be interesting indeed.

I like this kind of music, with a theme, a single theme moving and developing gradually with variations: countless variations playing out the same constant theme, variations branching out and coming back again to the original basic theme. In Europe too there was something of the kind in its otherwise very different style. Bach had it, Mozart too. In modern times some musicians like Debussy, Raval and the Russian Borodine and a few others have caught something of it. You take a certain number of notes, in a certain relation and upon that scheme you play variations, almost an infinite number of variations. It is marvellous: it takes you deep inside and, if you are ready, gives you the consciousness of the psychic, something that draws you back from the external physical consciousness and connects you with something otherwhere within.

THIS UGLINESS IN THE WORLD

Everything in the world has at its source a supreme truth, how is it then that the world has become ugly in its expression? Why are things at all ugly? Because there are other things that intervene between the Source and the manifestation. For example, if I asked you: "do you know your true being"? what would you say? You do not know ; it would be wonderful if you did. It is the same with all beings and things. And yet you are already a sufficiently developed being, a thinking being, and have gone through many stages of refinement; you are not quite the lizard walking on the wall! Still you cannot tell what is the truth of your being. That is the secret of the deformation in the world. It is because there is all the unconsciousness—the Inconscient—that has been created by the fact of separation from one's origin. It is this inconscience which prevents the Source from manifesting in its own nature, although it is there always. It is there, therefore all things exist, the world exists; but in its expression it is deformed, because it has to manifest itself through inconscience, through ignorance and obscurity. But how did it come about? The will to create was originally a will that projected itself towards individual formation; what it arrived at, however, was not the true individual (or individualisa-

tion) but a breaking up of the solid unity into infinitesimal fragments. The original indivisible unity became a sum of infinitely divided unities. These unities or units were individualisations of things separate and feeling and acting as such. It is precisely the feeling of separation from others that gives you the impression that you are an individual. Otherwise you would feel that you were only a fluid mass. That is to say, you are no longer conscious simply of your rigid outer form and all that cuts you off from others and makes of you a separate individual, you are conscious of the vital forces that move about everywhere, of the inconscient that is the foundation of all, you have the impression that you are a moving mass with all kinds of contradictory movements in it, which cannot be separated from each other. You would not have the impression that you are an individual being, but that you are something like one note or vibration in a whole complex. The original will was to form individual beings capable of becoming conscious again of their divine origin. This process of individualisation created the necessity that to be an individual one must feel oneself separate: that is why one is cut off from the original consciousness, at least apparently, and is fallen into inconscience. For the Life of life is the Origin alone and if it is separated from that source, consciousness naturally turns into unconsciousness and you lose trace of the truth of your being. That is the process of the creation or formation of the world by which the pure origin does not manifest directly in its essence and purity, but through deformation, that is to say, unconsciousness and ignorance. That is how ugliness came in, death and disease, wickedness and misery and all. It is the movement, I say, brought in by the necessity of individual formation that has produced these things, each and every one of them, that is the one source of the multiple evil in all its modes and vibrations. I do not say this was indispensable—that problem I may take up later on. But for the moment I direct you to the source in order to show the remedy. And there is no point in questioning why it is so. As I said, the only way to settle the world problem is to be conscious again, to recover the lost consciousness. Of course, if you say like some religions that good is good and evil evil and they will always remain so, then there is no longer any problem. An eternal struggle binds the two together and whichever wins for the moment will make the world a little better at one moment and a little worse at another. But the two exist, continue to exist eternally and indissolubly intertwined. But you have seen it is not like that; one can come out of the tangle into the perfect unity of the truth, for it is that which is the only and original source

It is this perfect truth, let me repeat, that has scattered itself abroad, into these innumerable little atoms, into these insignificant brain cells which, in spite of all their ignorance, are still moved by a secret stir of consciousness: these little specks of darkness reach out towards light which they can find, for it is within them. They will arrive at what they seek. It may take time more or less, but they will reach in the end. That is then the remedy: it lies in the very heart of evil itself.

THE DIVINE TRUTH—ITS NAME AND FORM

The divine truth at the heart of things, people have called by all kinds of names, every one presenting it from his own angle of experience. But always it is the one Reality. There are millions of ways leading towards it; but one thing is certain, you can find it, whatever the way you follow, whatever the form you give it: the result is the same, the final experience is identical. If all have touched the thing, they touch the same thing always. And the proof that they have touched the thing is that it is the same for all; if it is not the same thing, then they have not touched it. You can give it any name you like: a name is only a word.

What is the value of a word, after all? Have you not noticed that there are people who do not understand you, however clearly you speak to them. There are others again who understand you if you utter only two words. The external form—the sound of a word—has a meaning, if there is a force of thought behind; the greater the force of thought, the more powerful and precise and clear it is, the greater the chance of people receiving the force and understanding the word that carries the force. But if someone speaks without thinking, usually it is impossible to understand him; he would seem to you to make only a noise. You must have noticed also that people who have lived together and are habituated to each other's thought and talk, do not require any definition of the words they use or even a large use to understand each other. There has been a mental adjustment and the words are only an excuse for the inner contact, the contact between brain and brain which underlies or even precedes the words. But when you meet a new person, it takes you time to adapt and adjust yourself to understand the words he uses.

It is the meaning, the thought behind the word that is important. When the thought is powerfully thought, it produces a vibration of which the word is only a carrier, an intermediary. Indeed, you can develop the thought-

power to such an extent that you are able to establish a direct material contact with the minimum or even no words at all. Naturally this requires a strong power of concentration. But you will find that the bodily mechanism is only a mechanical means; it is an instrument, but not always important or indispensable.

When we are conscious of the Divine, do we see Him in all things in some particular form?

You expect to see a divine form in each and all things? It may happen so. But I am not sure; I have the impression that there is a large part of imagination in such experiences. You may, for example, see the form of Krishna or Christ or Buddha in every being or thing. But I say that much of human conception enters into this perception. Otherwise what I was telling you just now would not be true. I said all who have the consciousness of the Divine, all who get the contact with the Divine, wherever one may be, to whatever age or country he may belong, all have the same essential experience. If it were not so, the Hindus would always see one of their gods, the Europeans one of theirs, the Japanese a third variety and so on. This may be an addition of each one's own mental formation, but it would not be the Reality in its essence or purity which is beyond all form. One can have a perception of the Divine Presence, a very concrete perception, one can have even a personal contact with the Divine, but it need not happen in and through the kind of form you imagine; it is something inexpressible, beyond all explanation or definition, it is evident only to one who has the experience. It may be as you are suddenly lifted up into a peculiar condition, you find yourself in the presence of the Divine which takes a form familiar to you, a form you have been accustomed to associate with the Divine, because of your education, your upbringing and tradition. But, as I say, it is not the supreme essence of the experience: the form gives after all a limitation to the experience, takes away from it its universality and a large measure of its power.

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THE DEATH OF A GOD

THE East voices:
Arise now, tread out the fire!
Scatter the ashes of a God through the stars.
Forget to hope and aspire.
Let us paint our prison, let us strengthen its bars.

Lo, now he is dead and the greatness that cumbered the world and
Time's ways
Has vanished like a golden shadow thrust out from the anguish of
the ages;
The glory and burden, the sunlight and the passion have left our days;
Once more we can wear the grey livery of Death and gather in his wages.

All that drew back from his splendour, fleeing as ashamed from the light
and the beauty and invincible sweetness
Now returns vaunting this darkness and littleness, this fret of life's fever,
its cruel and sad incompleteness.

SRI AUROBINDO

HYMN TO INDRA*

1. Thee the Gayatrins[1] chant, the Arkins[2] begin their action; the mind movements, O Shatakratu, strive up by thee as they that climb a trunk.

2. When one climbeth from plateau to plateau, a rich activity expresses itself, then Indra bringeth the substance of thought into consciousness, he moves a lover[3] with his mate.[4]

3. Yoke thou thy maned steeds, covering with mastery fill the containing soul, then, O Indra, drinker of the nectar, respond with the Sruti to our words.

4. Come, vibrate[5] to our songs of praise, speak them out as they rise, cry out thy response; attach thyself to our mind, O King, O Indra, and increase in us the Yajna.

5. I form fully the prayer I have to declare towards Indra, the prayer that giveth increase, that potent Indra may have ecstasy in our nectar-yieldings and in our friendlinesses[6].

6. Him we desire in comradeship, him in delight, him in strong energy; therefore this puissant Indra in his kindliness hath power to give us his substance[7].

7. O Indra, wide and untroubled[8] success has been won, remove the *veil*[9] over these rays, create delight, O dweller on the hill.

8. Over thee the two obstructing firmaments have no power when thou

* Rig Veda I. 10
Rishi: Madhucchandas

[1] Or, 'Devatas of mind'
[2] Also, 'Devatas of mind'
[3] Or, 'master'
[4] Or, 'vibrates with the force and mastery of his action'.
yūtha joining, mate, that to which one is yoked, also force, strength.
[5] Or, 'answer'
[6] Or, 'acts of friendship'
[7] Or, 'hath power to distribute to us of his substance'.
[8] Or, 'undarkened'
[9] *vraj* doubtful—perhaps 'reveal the multitude of those rays'.

goest stiffly upward[1]; victorious pour down for us on our earths the waters of heaven.

9. Lend attentive ear and hear my call, now uphold[2] my words; O Indra, draw this my song of praise into Thy innermost part of the state of Yoga.

10. We know thee most supreme in the substantial strengths of being, a hearer of our call; because thou art thus supreme we call to thee for expansion of being strong in stability.

11. O Indra, of the sheaths, drink then the Soma, be steadfast in delight, give us wholly a new being and create for us the Knowledge that preserveth utterly our force.

12. O delighter in our words, may these our words be all around thee; may all increase follow the increase of our being and all love cling to it.

SRI AUROBINDO

YOGA is our union with some Being or some Reality, which is greater than ourselves or is our own greatest and real Self; it is That which by Yoga we join, enter into or become.

SRI AUROBINDO

[1] Or, 'when thou goest straight'
[2] Or, 'heed'

THOUGHTS AND GLIMPSES

New Series

IF Art's service is but to imitate Nature, then burn all the picture galleries and let us have instead photographic studios. It is because Art reveals what Nature hides that a small picture is worth more than all the jewels of the millionaires and the treasures of the princes.

*

If you only imitate visible Nature, you will perpetrate either a corpse, a dead sketch or a monstrosity; Truth lives in that which goes behind and beyond the visible and sensible.

*

O Poet, O Artist, if thou but holdest up the mirror to Nature, thinkest thou Nature will rejoice in thy work? Rather she will turn away her face. For what dost thou hold up to her there? Herself? No, but a lifeless outline and reflection, a shadowy mimicry. It is the secret soul of Nature thou hast to seize, thou hast to hunt eternally after the truth in the external symbol, and that no mirror will hold for thee, nor for Her whom thou seekest.

*

I find in Shakespeare a far greater and more consistent universalist than the Greeks. All his creations are universal types from Lancelot Gobbo and his dog up to Lear and Hamlet.

*

The Greeks sought universality by omitting all finer individual touches; Shakespeare sought it more successfully by universalising the rarest individual details of character. That which Nature uses for concealing from us the Infinite, Shakespeare used for revealing the Anantaguna in man to the eye of humanity.

*

Shakespeare who invented the figure of holding up the mirror to Nature, was the one poet who never condescended to a copy, a photograph or a shadow. The reader who sees in Falstaff, Macbeth, Lear or Hamlet imitations of Nature, has either no inner eye of the soul or has been hypnotised by a formula.

*

Where in material Nature wilt thou find Falstaff, Macbeth or Lear? Shadows and hints of them she possesses, but they themselves tower above her.

*

There are two for whom there is hope, the man who has felt God's touch and been drawn to it and the sceptical seeker and self-convinced atheist; but for the formularists of all the religions and the parrots of free thought, they are dead souls who follow a death that they call living.

*

A man came to a scientist and wished to be instructed; this instructor showed him the revelations of the microscope and telescope, but the man laughed and said, "These are obviously hallucinations inflicted on the eye by the glass which you use as a medium; I will not believe till you show these wonders to my naked seeing". Then the scientist proved to him by many collateral facts and experiments the reliability of his knowledge but the man laughed again and said, "what you term proofs, I term coincidences, the number of coincidences does not constitute proof; as for your experiments, they are obviously effected under abnormal conditions and constitute a sort of insanity of Nature." When confronted with the results of mathematics, he was angry and cried out, "This is obviously imposture, gibberish and superstition; will you try to make me believe that these absurd cabalistic figures have any real force and meaning?" Then the scientist drove him out as a hopeless imbecile; for he did not recognise his own system of denials and his own method of negative reasoning. If we wish to refuse an impartial and open-minded enquiry, we can always find the most respectable polysyllables to cover our refusal or impose tests and conditions which stultify the inquiry.

*

When our minds are involved in matter, they think matter the only reality; when we draw back into immaterial consciousness, then we see matter a mask and feel existence in consciousness alone having the touch of reality. Which then of these two is the truth? Nay, God knoweth; but he who has had both experiences, can easily tell which condition is the more fertile in knowledge, the mightier and more blissful.

*

I believe immaterial consciousness to be truer than material consciousness. Because I know in the first what in the second is hidden from me and also can command what the mind knows in matter.

*

Hell and Heaven exist only in the soul's consciousness. Ay, but so does the earth and its lands and seas and fields and deserts and mountains and rivers. All world is nothing but arrangement of the Soul's seeing.

There is only one soul and one existence; therefore we all see one objectivity only; but there are many knots of mind and ego in the one soul-existence, therefore we all see the one Object in different lights and shadows.

SRI AUROBINDO

THE YOGA OF INTEGRAL KNOWLEDGE*

CHAPTER I

THE OBJECT OF KNOWLEDGE

ALL spiritual seeking moves towards an object of Knowledge to which men ordinarily do not turn the eye of the mind, to someone or something Eternal, Infinite, Absolute that is not the temporal things or forces of which we are sensible although he or it may be in them or behind them or their source or creator. It aims at a state of knowledge by which we can touch, enter or know by identity this Eternal, Infinite, and Absolute, a consciousness other than our ordinary consciousness of ideas and forms and things, a knowledge that is not what we call knowledge but something self-existent, ever-lasting, infinite. And although it may or even necessarily must, since man is a mental creature, start from our ordinary instruments of knowledge, yet it must as necessarily go beyond them and use supra-sensuous and supramental means and faculties, for it is in search of something that is itself supra-sensuous and supramental and beyond the grasp of the mind and senses, even if through mind and sense there can come a first glimpse of it or a reflected image.

The traditional systems, whatever their other differences, all proceed on the belief or the perception that the Eternal and Absolute can only be or at least can only inhabit a pure transcendent state of non-cosmic existence or else a non-existence. All cosmic existence or all that we call existence is a state of ignorance. Even the highest individual perfection, even the blissful cosmic condition is no better than a supreme ignorance. All that is individual, all that is cosmic has to be austerely renounced by the seeker of the absolute Truth. The supreme quiescent Self or else the absolute Nihil is the sole Truth, the only object of spiritual knowledge. The state

Synthesis of Yoga, Chapter XIII (*Arya* Vol. II), *Revised*. The text in the *Arya* was considerably revised by Sri Aurobindo.

of knowledge, the consciousness other than this temporal that we must attain is Nirvana, an extinction of ego, a cessation of all mental, vital and physical activities, of all activities whatsoever, a supreme illumined quiescence, the pure bliss of an impersonal tranquillity self-absorbed and ineffable. The means are meditation, concentration excluding all things else, a total loss of the mind in its object. Action is permissible only in the first stages of the search in order to purify the seeker and make him morally and temperamentally a fit vessel for the knowledge. Even this action must either be confined to the performance of the rites of worship and the prescribed duties of life rigorously ordained by the Hindu Shastra or, as in the Buddhistic discipline, must be guided along the eightfold path to the supreme practice of the works of compassion which lead towards the practical annihilation of self in the good of others. In the end, in any severe and pure Jnanayoga, all works must be abandoned for an entire quiescence. Action may prepare salvation, it cannot give it. Any continued adherence to action is incompatible with the highest progress and may be an insuperable obstacle to the attainment of the spiritual goal. The supreme state of quiescence is the very opposite of action and cannot be attained by those who persist in works. And even devotion, love, worship are disciplines for the unripe soul, are at best the best methods of the Ignorance. For they are offered to something other, higher and greater than ourselves; but in the supreme knowledge there can be no such thing, since there is either only one self or no self at all and therefore either no one to do the worship and offer the love and devotion or no one to receive it. Even thought-activity must disappear in the sole consciousness of identity or of nothingness and by its own quiescence bring about the quiescence of the whole nature. The absolute Identical alone must remain or else the eternal Nihil.

This pure Jnanayoga comes by the intellect, although it ends in the transcendence of the intellect and its workings. The thinker in us separates himself from all the rest of what we phenomenally are, rejects the heart, draws back from the life and the senses, separates from the body that he may arrive at his own exclusive fulfilment in that which is beyond even himself and his function. There is a truth that underlies, as there is an experience that seems to justify, this attitude. There is an Essence that is in its nature a quiescence, a supreme of Silence in the Being that is beyond its own development and mutations, immutable and therefore superior to all activities of which it is at most a Witness. And in the hierarchy of our psychological functions the Thought is in a way nearest to this Self

nearest at least to its aspect of the all-conscious knower who regards all activities but can stand back from them all. The heart, will and other powers in us are fundamentally active, turn naturally towards action, find through it their fulfilment,—although they also may automatically arrive at a certain quiescence by fullness of satisfaction in their activities or else by a reverse process of exhaustion through perpetual disappointment and dissatisfaction. The thought too is an active power, but is more capable of arriving at quiescence by its own conscious choice and will. The thought is more easily content with the illumined intellectual perception of this silent Witness Self that is higher than all our activities and, that immobile spirit once seen, is ready, deeming its mission of truth-finding accomplished, to fall at rest and become itself immobile. For in its most characteristic movement it is itself apt to be a disinterested witness, judge, observer of things more than an eager participant and passionate labourer in the work and can arrive very readily at a spiritual or philosophic calm and detached aloofness. And since men are mental beings, thought, if not truly their best and highest, is at least their most constant, normal and effective means for enlightening their ignorance. Armed with its functions of gathering and reflection, meditation, fixed contemplation, the absorbed dwelling of the mind on its object, *śravana*, *manana*, *nididhyāsana*, it stands at our tops as an indispensable aid to our realisation of that which we pursue, and it is not surprising that it should claim to be the leader of the journey and the only available guide or at least the direct and innermost door of the temple.

In reality thought is only a scout and pioneer; it can guide but not command or effectuate. The leader of the journey, the captain of the march, the first and most ancient priest of our sacrifice is the Will. This Will is not the wish of the heart or the demand or preference of the mind to which we often give the name. It is that inmost, dominant and often veiled conscious force of our being and of all being, Tapas, Shakti, Sraddha, that sovereignly determines our orientation and of which the intellect and the heart are more or less blind and automatic servants and instruments. The Self that is quiescent, at rest, vacant of things and happenings is a support and background to existence, a silent channel or a hypostasis of something Supreme: it is not itself the one entirely real existence, not itself the Supreme. The Eternal, the Supreme is the Lord and the all-originating Spirit. Superior to all activities and not bound by any of them, it is the source, sanctum, material, efficient power, master of all activities. All activities

proceed from this supreme Self and are determined by it; all are its operations, processes of its own conscious force and not of something alien to Self, some power other than this Spirit. In these activities is expressed the conscious Will or Shakti of the Spirit moved to manifest its being in infinite ways, a Will or Power not ignorant but at one with its own self-knowledge and its knowledge of all that it is put out to express. And of this Power a secret spiritual will and soul-faith in us, the dominant hidden force of our nature, is the individual instrument, more nearly in communication with the Supreme, a surer guide and enlightener, could we once get at it and hold it, because profounder and more intimately near to the Identical and Absolute than the surface activities of our thought powers. To know that will in ourselves and in the universe and follow it to its divine finalities, whatever these may be, must surely be the highest way and truest culmination for knowledge as for works, for the seeker in life and for the seeker in Yoga.

The thought, since it is not the highest or strongest part of Nature, not even the sole or deepest index to Truth, ought not to follow its own exclusive satisfaction or take that for the sign of its attainment to the supreme Knowledge. It is here as the guide, up to a certain point, of the heart, the life and the other members but it cannot be a substitute for them; it has to see not only what is its own ultimate satisfaction but whether there is not an ultimate satisfaction intended also for these other members. An exclusive path of abstract thought would be justified, only if the object of the Supreme Will in the universe has been nothing more than a descent into the activity of the ignorance operated by the mind as blinding instrument and jailor through false idea and sensation and an ascent into the quiescence of knowledge equally operated by the mind through correct thought as enlightening instrument and saviour. But the chances are that there is an aim in the world less absurd and aimless, an impulse towards the Absolute less dry and abstract, a truth of the world more large and complex, a more richly infinite height of the Infinite. Certainly, an abstract logic must always arrive, as the old systems arrived, at an infinite empty Negation or an infinite equally vacant Affirmation; for, abstract it moves towards an absolute abstraction and these are the only two abstractions that are absolutely absolute. But a concrete ever deepening wisdom waiting on more and more riches of infinite experience and not the confident abstract logic of the narrow and incompetent human mind is likely to be the key to a divine suprahuman knowledge. The heart, the will, the life and even

the body, no less than the thought, are forms of a divine Conscious-Being and indices of great significance. These too have powers by which the soul can return to its complete self-awareness or means by which it can enjoy it. The object of the Supreme Will may well be a culmination in which the whole being is intended to receive its divine satisfaction, the heights enlightening the depths, the material Inconscient revealed to itself as the Divine by the touch of the supreme Superconscience.

The traditional Way of Knowledge proceeds by elimination and rejects successively the body, the life, the senses, the heart, the very thought in order to merge into the quiescent Self or supreme Nihil or indefinite Absolute. The way of integral knowledge supposes that we are intended to arrive at an integral self-fulfilment and the only thing that is to be eliminated is our own unconsciousness, the Ignorance and the results of the Ignorance. Eliminate the falsity of the being which figures as the ego; then the true being can manifest in us. Eliminate the falsity of the life which figures as mere vital craving and the mechanical round of our corporeal existence; our true life in the power of the Godhead and the joy of the Infinite will appear. Eliminate the falsity of the senses with their subjection to material shows and to dual sensations; there is a greater sense in us that can open through these to the Divine in things and divinely reply to it. Eliminate the falsity of the heart with its turbid passions and desires and its dual emotions; a deeper heart in us can open with its divine love for all creatures and its infinite passion and yearning for the responses of the Infinite. Eliminate the falsity of the thought with its imperfect mental constructions, its arrogant assertions and denials, its limited and exclusive concentrations; a greater faculty of Knowledge is behind that can open to the true Truth of God and the soul and Nature and the universe. An integral self-fulfilment, —an absolute, a culmination for the experiences of the heart, for its instinct of love, joy, devotion and worship; an absolute, a culmination for the senses, for their pursuit of divine beauty and good and delight in the forms of things; an absolute, a culmination for the life, for its pursuit of works, of divine power, mastery and perfection; an absolute, a culmination beyond its own limits for the thought, for its hunger after truth and light and divine wisdom and knowledge. Not something quite other than themselves from which they are all cast away is the end of these things in our nature, but something supreme in which they at once transcend themselves and find their own absolutes and infinitudes, their harmonies beyond measure.

Behind the traditional way of Knowledge, justifying its thought-process

of elimination and withdrawal stands an overmastering spiritual experience. Deep, intense, convincing, common to all who have overstepped a certain limit of the active mind-belt into the horizonless inner space, this is the great experience of liberation, the consciousness of something within us that is behind and outside of the universe and all its forms, interests, aims, events and happenings, calm, untouched, unconcerned, illimitable, immobile, free, the uplook to something above us indescribable and unseizable into which by abolition of our personality we can enter, the presence of an omnipresent eternal witness Purusha, the sense of an Infinity or a Timelessness that looks down on us from an august negation of all our existence and is alone the one thing Real. This experience is the highest sublimation of spiritualised mind looking resolutely beyond its own existence. No one who has not passed through this liberation can be entirely free from the mind and its meshes, but one is not compelled to linger in this experience for ever. Great as it is, it is only the Mind's overwhelming experience of what is beyond itself and all it can conceive. It is a supreme negative experience, but beyond it is all the tremendous light of an infinite consciousness, an illimitable Knowledge, an affirmative absolute Presence.

The object of spiritual knowledge is the Supreme, the Divine, the Infinite, and Absolute. This Supreme has its relations to our individual being and its relations to the universe and it transcends both the soul and the universe. Neither the universe nor the individual are what they seem to be, for the report of them which our mind and our senses give us, is, so long as they are unenlightened by a faculty of higher supramental and suprasensuous knowledge, a false report, an imperfect construction, an attenuated and erroneous figure. And yet that which the universe and the individual seem to be is still a figure of what they really are, a figure that points beyond itself to the reality behind it. Truth proceeds by a correction of the values our mind and senses give us, and first by the action of a higher intelligence that enlightens and sets right as far as may be the conclusions of the ignorant sense-mind and limited physical intelligence; that is the method of all human knowledge and science. But beyond it there is a knowledge, a Truth-consciousness, that exceeds our intellect and brings us into the true light of which it is a refracted ray. There the abstract terms of pure reason and the constructions of the mind disappear or are converted into concrete soul-vision and the tremendous actuality of spiritual experience. This knowledge can turn away to the absolute Eternal and lose vision of the soul and the universe; but it can

too see that existence from that Eternal. When that is done, we find that the ignorance of the mind and the senses and all the apparent futilities of human life were not an useless excursion of the conscious being, an otiose blunder. Here they were planned as a rough ground for the self-expression of the Soul that comes from the Infinite, a material foundation for its self-unfolding and self-possessing in the terms of the universe. It is true that in themselves they and all that is here have no significance, and to build separate significances for them is to live in an illusion, Maya; but they have a supreme significance in the Supreme, an absolute Power in the Absolute and it is that that assigns to them and refers to that Truth their present relative values. This is the all-uniting experience that is the foundation of the deepest integral and most intimate self-knowledge and world-knowledge.

In relation to the individual the Supreme is our own true and highest self, that which ultimately we are in our essence, that of which we are in our manifested nature. A spiritual knowledge, moved to arrive at the true Self in us, must reject, as the traditional way of knowledge rejects, all misleading appearances. It must discover that the body is not our self, our foundation of existence; it is a sensible form of the Infinite. The experience of Matter as the world's sole foundation and the physical brain and nerves and cells and molecules as the one truth of all things in us, the ponderous inadequate basis of materialism, is a delusion, a half-view taken for the whole, the dark bottom or shadow of things misconceived as the luminous substance, the effective figure of zero for the Integer. The materialist idea mistakes a creation for the creative Power, a means of expression for That which is expressed and expresses. Matter and our physical brain and nerves and body are the field and foundation for one action of a vital force that serves to connect the Self with the form of its works and maintains them by its direct dynamis. The material movements are an exterior notation by which the soul represents its perceptions of certain truths of the Infinite and makes them effective in the terms of Substance. These things are a language, a notation, a hieroglyphic, a system of symbols, not themselves the deepest truest sense of the things they intimate.

Neither is the Life our Self, the vitality, the energy which plays in the brain, nerves and body; it is a power and not the whole power of the Infinite. The experience of a life-force instrumentalising Matter as the foundation, source and true sum of all things, the vibrating unsteady basis of vitalism, is a delusion, a half-view taken for the whole, a tide on a near

shore misconceived as all the ocean and its waters. The vitalist idea takes something powerful but outward for the essence. Life-force is the dynamisation of a consciousness which exceeds it. That consciousness is felt and acts but does not become valid to us in intelligence until we arrive at the higher term of Mind, our present summit. Mind is here apparently a creation of Life, but it is really the ulterior sense—not the ultimate—of Life itself and what is behind it and a more conscious formulation of its secret; Mind is an expression not of Life, but of that of which Life itself is a less luminous expression.

And yet Mind also, our mentality, our thinking, understanding part, is not our Self, is not That, not the end or the beginning; it is a half-light thrown from the Infinite. The experience of mind as the creator of forms and things and of these forms and things existing in the Mind only, the thin subtle basis of idealism, is also a delusion, a half-view taken for the whole, a pale refracted light idealised as the burning body of the sun and its splendour. This idealist vision also does not arrive at the essence of being, does not even touch it but only an inferior mode of Nature. Mind is the dubious outer penumbra of a conscious existence which is not limited by mentality but exceeds it. The method of the traditional way of knowledge, eliminating all these things arrives at the conception and realisation of a pure conscious existence, self-aware, self-blissful, unconditioned by mind and life and body, and to its ultimate positive experience that is Atman, the Self, the original and essential nature of our existence. Here at last there is something centrally true, but in its haste to arrive at it this knowledge assumes that there is nothing between the thinking mind and the Highest, *buddheh paratastu sah*, and, shutting its eyes in samadhi, tries to rush through all that actually intervenes without even seeing these great and luminous kingdoms of the Spirit. Perhaps it arrives at its object, but only to fall asleep in the Infinite. Or, if it remains awake, it is in the highest experience of the Supreme into which the self-annulling Mind can enter but not in the supreme of the Supreme, Paratpara. The Mind can only be aware of the Self in a mentalised spiritual thinness, only of the mind-reflected Sachchidananda. The highest truth, the integral self-knowledge is not to be gained by this self-blinded leap into the Absolute but by a patient transit beyond the mind into the Truth-consciousness where the Infinite can be known, felt, seen, experienced in all the fullness of its unending riches. And there we discover this Self that we are to be not only a static tenuous vacant Atman but a great dynamic Spirit individual, uni

versal and transcendent. That Self and Spirit cannot be expressed by the mind's abstract generalisations; all the inspired descriptions of the seers and mystics cannot exhaust its contents and its splendours.

In relation to the universe the Supreme is Brahman, the one Reality which is not only the spiritual, material and conscious substance of all the ideas and forces and forms of the universe, but their origin, support and possessor, the cosmic and supracosmic Spirit. All the last terms to which we can reduce the universe, Force and Matter, Name and Form, Purusha and Prakriti, are still not entirely that which the universe really is either in itself or its nature. As all that we are is the play and form, the mental, psychic, vital and physical expression of a supreme Self unconditioned by mind and life and body, the universe too is the play and form and cosmic soul-expression and nature-expression of a supreme existence which is unconditioned by force and matter, unconditioned by idea and name and form, unconditioned by the fundamental distinction of Purusha and Prakriti. Our supreme Self and the supreme Existence which has become the universe are one spirit, one self and one existence. The individual is in nature one expression of the universal Being, in spirit an emanation of the Transcendence. For if he finds his self, he finds too that his own true self is not this natural personality, this created individuality, but is an universal being in its relations with others and with Nature and in its upward term a portion or the living front of a supreme transcendental Spirit.

This supreme Existence is not conditioned by the individual or by the universe. A spiritual knowledge can therefore surpass or even eliminate these two powers of the Spirit and arrive at the conception of something utterly Transcendent, something that is unnameable and mentally unknowable, a sheer Absolute. The traditional way of knowledge eliminates individual and universe. The Absolute it seeks after is featureless, indefinable, relationless, not this, not that, *neti neti*. And yet we can say of it that it is One, that it is Infinite, that it is Ineffable Bliss, Consciousness, Existence. Although unknowable to the mind, yet through our individual being and through the names and forms of the universe we can approach the realisation of the supreme Self that is Brahman, and by the realisation of the Self we come to a certain realisation also of this utter Absolute of which our true Self is the essential form in our consciousness (*svarūpa*). These are the devices the human mind is compelled to use if it is to form to itself any conception at all of a transcendent and unconditioned Absolute. The system of negation is indispensable to it in order to get rid of its own definitions and limited experience;

it is obliged to escape through a vague Indefinite into the Infinite. For it lives in a closed prison of constructions and representations that are necessary for its action but are not the self-existent truth either of Matter or Life or Mind or Spirit. But if we can once cross beyond the Mind's frontier twilight into the vast plane of supramental Knowledge, these devices cease to be indispensable. Supermind has quite another, a positive and direct and living experience of the supreme Infinite. The Absolute is beyond personality and beyond impersonality, and yet it is both the Impersonal and the supreme Person and all persons. The Absolute is beyond the distinction of unity and multiplicity, and yet it is the One and the innumerable Many in all the universes. It is beyond all limitation by quality and yet it is not limited by a qualityless void but is too all infinite qualities. It is the individual soul and all souls and more of them; it is the formless Brahman and the universe. It is the cosmic and the supracosmic spirit, the supreme Lord, the supreme Self, the supreme Purusha and supreme Shakti, the Ever Unborn who is endlessly born, the Infinite who is innumerably finite, the multitudinous One, the complex Simple, the many-sided Single, the Word of the Silence Ineffable, the impersonal omnipresent Person, the Mystery, translucent in highest consciousness to its own spirit, but to a lesser consciousness veiled in its own exceeding light and impenetrable for ever. These things are to the dimensional mind irreconcilable opposites, but to the constant vision and experience of the supramental Truth-consciousness they are so simply and inevitably the intrinsic nature of each other that even to think of them as contraries is an unimaginable violence. The walls constructed by the measuring and separating Intellect have disappeared and the Truth in its simplicity and beauty appears and reduces all to terms of its harmony and unity and light. Dimensions and distinctions remain but as figures for use, not a separative prison for the self-forgetting Spirit.

The consciousness of the transcendent Absolute with its consequence in individual and universal is the last, the eternal knowledge. Our minds may deal with it on various lines, may build upon it conflicting philosophies, may limit, modify, overstress, understress sides of the knowledge, deduce from it truth or error; but our intellectual variations and imperfect statements make no difference to the ultimate fact that if we push thought and experience to their end, this is the knowledge in which they terminate. The object of a Yoga of spiritual knowledge can be nothing else than this eternal Reality, this Self, this Brahman, this Transcendent that dwells over all

and in all and is manifest yet concealed in the individual, manifest yet disguised in the universe.

The culmination of the path of knowledge need not necessarily entail extinction of our world-existence. For the Supreme to whom we assimilate ourselves, the Absolute and Transcendent into whom we enter has always the complete and ultimate consciousness for which we are seeking and yet he supports by it his play in the world. Neither are we compelled to believe that our world-existence ends because by attaining to knowledge its object or consummation is fulfilled and therefore there is nothing more for us here afterwards. For what we gain at first, with its release and immeasurable silence and quietude is only the eternal self-realisation by the individual in the essence of his conscious being; there will still remain on that foundation, unannulled by the silence, one with the release and freedom, the infinitely proceeding self-fulfilment of Brahman, its dynamic divine manifestation in the individual and by his presence, example and action in others and in the universe at large,—the work which the Great Ones remain to do. Our dynamic self-fulfilment cannot be worked out so long as we remain in the egoistic consciousness, in the mind's candle-lit darkness, in the bondage. Our present limited consciousness can only be a field of preparation, it can consummate nothing; for all that it manifests is marred through and through by an ego-ridden ignorance and error. The true and divine self-fulfilment of Brahman in the manifestation is only possible on the foundation of the Brahman-consciousness and therefore through the acceptance of life by the liberated soul, the Jivanmukta.

This is the integral knowledge for we know that everywhere and in all conditions all to the eye that sees is One, to a divine experience all is one block of the Divine. It is only the mind which for the temporary convenience of its own thought and aspiration seeks to cut an artificial line of rigid division, a fiction of perpetual incompatibility between one aspect and another of the eternal oneness. The liberated knower lives and acts in the world not less than the bound soul and ignorant mind but more, doing all actions, *sarvakṛt*, only with a true knowledge and a greater conscient power. And by so doing he does not forfeit the supreme unity nor falls from the supreme consciousness and highest knowledge. For the Supreme, however hidden now to us, is here in the world no less than he could be in the most utter and ineffable self-extinction, the most intolerant Nirvana.

SRI AUROBINDO

THE INTEGRAL AUTONOMY OF BEING

THE whole world is built upon the principle of freedom, but a leaden subjection is its apparent fact. As the essential delight of existence of which the Upanishads speak has turned here into undelight, pain and suffering; as the essential harmony has turned into disharmony and discord; as the essential light of knowledge has turned into the darkness or obscurity of ignorance; so freedom has turned into subjection and slavery. Each living unit, each conscious being in the world has the inherent freedom to follow its own course; is, indeed, meant to do so in perfect accord with others; but in reality each is in bondage to some iron law of Nature, or some Chance or Necessity. To the eye of knowledge all beings and creatures appear to be mounted on the wheels of Maya and whirled along by the tangled force of the three gunas or the qualitative modes of Nature. It is true that in man there is a sense of freedom—freedom of choice and action; but if he probes deeper within himself, he will discover that his choice and his decision spring from a shifting combination of his psychological elements and the general unstable background of his natural temperament; and his action follows instincts and impulses which often seem to elude his mental control and can only half express and half obscure his will and decision. He will also discover that what he regards as his free-will is but a tool or device of Nature designed to serve a double end: first, to give him a false, a delusive sense of freedom, so that he can complacently continue in her subjection; and, second, to give him a semblance, perhaps even a tantalising glimpse of the real freedom which will one day be his when he transcends his ego and realises his soul. Nature works through many an enigma and paradox. She is at once the binder of souls and their deliverer. She starts by binding and ends by delivering. But so long as the consciousness of man has not widened beyond the triple formula of the lower Nature, *aparā prakriti*, he cannot be really free. He can be free only when he stands superior to all compulsion, inner and outer; which amounts to a superiority to that very existence of which desire is the fulcrum and the ego the self-appointed leader.

But why this bondage and subjection, one may ask in amazement, if freedom is the essential principle of existence? Sri Aurobindo would reply that division is the root of this subjection, the phenomenal fact of division in the indivisible unity of universal existence. But why and how did this division start? It started, because the One willed to be many, *sa aichchata ekoham vahusyam*. Delimitation, differentiation, diversification culminated in complete division and separation. Evolution, starting from Matter, proceeded on the principle of infinite divisibility of substance, and each atom that flitted apart from others was, as it were, a dumb representative, an unconscious symbol of an evolving conscious individuality. In man the individuality became definite, distinct, specific; the sense of separation was clinched. This division, this sense of separation is the chief cause of bondage and subjection. For, if it is the universal Nature that has formed and developed this surface individuality, then she is undoubtedly its leader and guide; and to think of a separate individual free-will is but to betray one's ignorance of the mechanism of one's nature. Not that a rigid determinism is the ultimate truth of existence—there is always a flux, a precarious balancing of elements and energies, an uncertain wrestle of forces which leave ample scope for individual choice and initiative; but the choice and initiative come from Nature and not from any separate "I" drunk with the false sense of its own independence.

Still, there is somewhere in us, deep down in our being, an entity that is a real individual; not created by the lower nature of the three gunas, but immortal and free. It has in it the potentiality of being universal and transcendent, and embracing the whole world in its illimitable consciousness. Not identified with any formation of Nature, it is free from all compulsion and free to realise its will in the world of forms. It is the soul or psychic being in us. If we unite with it, we are cured of all sense of separation and recover the oneness of existence in which there is no subjection, because there is no division. The will that flashes out from the soul is not the will of the Nature of the three gunas, but the will of the self-nature of the soul, its pure spiritual nature, which is attuned to or rather a spark of the will of the Divine. To realise and live in the soul is to live in perfect freedom. It is to realise the central autonomy of our being.

Those whose spiritual aim is to liberate the soul from the yoke of Nature and live in its inalienable freedom, will be satisfied with this central autonomy of their being, and seek for no other achievement in life. There are, indeed, many who do not even believe in the possibility of any other achieve-

ment. A certain purity and transparency in the nature, permitting of a clear reflection of the free soul, is regarded by them as the highest attainment. They do not seem to conceive of any radical transformation and liberation of Nature. The utmost that they expect is an intense purification of it, resulting in a great increase and predominance of the quality of sattwa, the quality of limpid understanding and happiness and harmony. But whatever the predominance and perfection of sattwa, the harmony established by it in the nature is an imperfect and insecure harmony; for, the other two gunas, rajas and tamas, never cease from contending for mastery and clouding the sattwic light. These spiritual seekers leave Nature more and less to herself, bound to her own limited modes and qualities and subject to gross or subtle obscurations. They are content only with the autonomy of the soul.

Sri Aurobindo envisages an integral autonomy in the human being. Not only the soul of man, but his mind, heart, life and even his body can be made free and autonomous. The principle behind this postulate is as old as the Veda and the Upanishads. We know that there is an Annamaya Purusha in us who can be called the physical being in the body, possessing greater potentialities and commanding higher powers than the material sheath it occupies. By a perfect development of the consciousness and force of this Annamaya Purusha, one can build up a stable autonomy in one's physical personality. Similarly, we have a Pranamaya Purusha who can be made to awake to his divine possibilities and establish an autonomous kingdom in the prana or the vital, full of the tranquil delight of desireless enjoyment. The Manomaya Purusha can likewise exercise his mastery over the vagrant thoughts and fancies of the mind and establish a harmony and autonomy in it. Each part of our composite being is indispensable to the fullness of the whole and has to be given the utmost scope and facilities for developing itself in a happy and healthy freedom.

The autonomy of the physical being will mean its freedom from the tyranny of the lower vital and the pontifical interference of the mind. A limpid intuition will play in it, developing strength and suppleness and a conscious receptivity to the higher spiritual forces. It will seek and cherish Light with the same tenacity with which it clings now to its habitual inertia and obscurity. The autonomy of the prana or the vital will mean a release from all duress and dictation of the mind, on the one hand, and the incapacitating inertia and conservatism of the body, on the other. The prana will grow in force and flexibility and harmony and amplitude. It will revel

in all high explorations and adventures, unhampered by the yoke of the body and the cautious timidity of the mind. The autonomy of the mind will be an ordered play of intuition in thought and reason and judgement, and a settled polarity to the light of Truth undeflected by the desires and passions of the prana or the dull drag of the body. And this integral autonomy, built and organised round the Divine in our psychic essence, can alone make us free from all bondage to the modes of Nature. The Will of the omnipresent One is the only free Will in the world, and it is our union with the Divine and His Will that alone can make us really free.

This vision of an integral autonomy of the human being opens up vast horizons in spiritual culture. The ideal of the salvation of the individual soul or the Chaitya Purusha ceases to have an exclusive appeal; it seems to be imperfect and incomplete. A more comprehensive ideal of the integral liberation of the being—liberation of the Annamaya, Pranamaya and Manomaya Purushas along with or in the wake of that of the Chaitya Purusha commands our devotion and presses forward towards self-realisation. No longer can we afford to leave out the Annamaya, Pranamaya and Manomaya Purushas in the cold shade of neglect and concentrate exclusively on the development and freedom of the soul or the Chaitya Purusha. What has been attained up to now in the field of spiritual realisation appears rather poor and insufficient by the side of this embracing ideal of the integral freedom and autonomy of the whole being of man. If the Annamaya, Pranamaya and Manomaya Purushas are the projections of our central being, the Self, then it stands to reason that there is a teleological purpose in their existence in us, and a full and perfect development of all their potentialities must be included in any wide scheme of synthetic spiritual culture. It would be irrational, if not positively disastrous to the harmonious fulfilment of our spiritual destiny, to relegate these Purushas to the limbo of Avidya in our impatient, vertiginous drive towards the soul or the Spirit. They have been called Brahman in the Upanishads—*Annam Brahmeti vyajanat*, he (Bhrigu, son of Varuna) knew Matter as Brahman; *prano Brahmeti vyajanat*, he knew Life as Brahman; *mano Brahmeti vyajanat*, he knew Mind as Brahman.[1] Ancient knowledge saw man as an evolving organism with correlated components grouped round the soul, which is the secret abode of the Divine. Each component part has its own soul, as it were, a delegated image of the central being, presiding over the growth

[1] Taittiriya Upanishad.

and perfection of its own realm. Each has its own innate truth and law of spontaneous outflowering. Therefore, when each part of man develops according to its own law and rhythm without any let or hindrance from others, and yet maintains a relation of mutual interchange and harmonious co-operation, we have an integral autonomy in the whole being.

The truth of this federal autonomy of our composite being has an important bearing upon the theory and practice of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. The Integral Yoga starts with a simultaneous movement of surrender to the Divine Mother and an awakening of the soul or the psychic being. The more the psychic being awakes, the more it infuses itself into the parts of our nature and awakes in each of them the dormant Purusha. The evolution of the consciousness and will of these Purushas makes the aspiration integral and dynamically fruitful. Coercion or suppression has no place in the action of the Integral Yoga. Each part of our nature must seek the Light and willingly lend itself to a radical transformation by it. Each part must of itself open to the Mother's redeeming Force, and cannot be compelled by others with impunity. The influence of the psychic being can do much to purify and enlighten the parts and remove the impediments to their efflorescence; but for any direct intervention of the higher Light or Force, it is essential that the parts themselves should seek and aspire for it and gladly submit to its work of transfiguration. What is usually done in the traditional yogas is that a sort of purification is imposed upon the parts of the nature by the sattwic mind under the direct or indirect pressure of the soul. In the Integral Yoga something of this method can be followed in the beginning, but for the final stages of purification, and particularly of transformation, it has to be replaced by the direct aspiration and opening of the parts themselves under the inspiration and guidance of the presiding Purusha in each of them. "Each part has to be kept clear from the other and do its own work and each has to get the Truth in it from the psychic and above. The truth descending from above will more and more harmonise their action, though the perfect harmony can come only when there is the supramental fulfilment." (Letters of Sri Aurobindo —vol. IV) The assent of each part of the being is indispensable in the sadhana of the Integral Yoga, for conversion and transformation cannot be imposed upon any unwilling or recalcitrant part. If any part refuses to turn to the Light or admit it into itself when it comes, the only effective way to deal with it is to put it more and more in touch with the soul, to infect it with the psychic aspiration and devotion, and convince it by the

knowledge of the enlightened intelligence of the error of its refusal and the absolute certainty of its highest fulfilment in the Divine Life. No grim-eyed repression can ever avail in the long run—the outraged part is sure to revolt and avenge itself by explosive outbursts. The Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya Purushas have each to be awakened, fostered in their growth, stimulated in their high aspiration and linked with the Chaitya Purusha, so that an integrated human personality may emerge from the welter of our nature's normal anarchy. In an integral spiritual culture, it is not enough to make the mind fully conscious and luminous with knowledge; the consciousness of the prana and even of the body have to be developed to such an extent as to effect their complete release from the subconscience or inconscience in which much of them is at present engulfed.

It may sound paradoxical to speak of making the body and the prana conscious, but once we admit the Upanishadic truth that there is a Purusha in the body, a Purusha, a projection of our Self, in the vital, evolving with the evolution of our material and vital parts, the awakening of consciousness in what seems unconscious becomes an inevitable eventuality.[1] In fact, evolution is nothing but a progressive emergence of consiousness from the dense inconscience of Matter. Whatever may have been the aim and endeavour of the ascetic yogas, which sought their fulfilment elsewhere than on this earth, one of the most important parts of the working of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo is to awaken and develop the physical, the vital and the mental being of man and lead them, first under the influence of the psychic (the soul) and then by the unveiled power of the Supermind or the Vijnana, towards a divine fulfilment of their destiny; for, their destiny is not dissolution or extinction, but the manifestation of the Light and Power and Love and Bliss and Beauty of God on earth. The transformation of man's nature presupposes an evolution of consciousness in every part of the being; at least, it can go on with an unfaltering steadiness only if the consciousness has already awakened. "If you desire this transformation," says Sri Aurobindo in the "Mother", "put yourself in the hands of the Mother and her Powers without cavil or resistance and let her do unhindered her work within you. Three things you must have, consciousness, plasticity and unreserved surrender. For you must be conscious in your mind and soul and heart and life and *the very cells of the body*, aware of the Mother

[1] Cf. " The physical consciousness has to become balanced, filled with the light and force from above, made conscious and receptive"—Letters of Sri Aurobindo, Vol. IV

and her Powers and their working; for although she can and does work in you even in your obscurity and your unconscious parts and moments, it is not the same thing as when you are in an awakened and living communion with her...consciousness will awake everywhere in you by constant openness to the Wisdom and Light, the Force, the Harmony and Beauty, the Perfection that come flowing down from above. Even the body will awake and unite at last its consciousness subliminal no longer to the supramental superconscious Force, feel all her powers permeating from above and below and around it and thrill to a supreme Love and Ananda."

Let us illustrate by an example what we mean by the conscious aspiration and opening of the body. If there is some illness in my body, my mental prayer to the Divine Mother to heal it will certainly bear fruit, but the fruit may take more or less time in coming; but, if my body is perverse or inert and closed to any higher influence, it may take very long or may not come at all. In any case, even if the result comes, it may not be the same as if the body consciousness itself had prayed and opened to the Mother's Force and received it when it came. In the latter case the result would have been miraculously rapid, even instantaneous, and powerfully, because directly, effective. The body can be made fully conscious with a consciousness all its own. It can pray and aspire and profit by the Grace that comes down in response to its call. Similarly the prana or the vital can be made fully conscious and autonomous. We find most illuminating examples of the conscious will and action of the body and the vital in the Prayers and Meditations of the Mother. In her Prayer of the 3rd November, 1912, the Mother speaks of the will of her body "to become Thy (the Divine's) docile instrument and Thy faithful servant". In her Prayer of the 19th November, 1912, she says in regard to her body, "...this substance which, being Thyself, desires to be Thy willing servant." Again in her Prayer of July 11, 1914, she says, "The whole physical being would wish to be dissolved and reconstituted in an adoration without limit, O Lord." In her Prayer of December 8, 1916, we get a very interesting description of the separate conscious movements of her mind and vital: "Suddenly awakened, the vital being rose, stretched itself and shook off the dust of its long torpor; it perceived from the elasticity of its members that it was still vigorous and fit to act. And it was with an ardent faith that it replied to the sovereign call: 'Here am I, what demandest Thou of me, O Lord?' But before another word could be uttered, the mind intervened in its turn, and, after bowing

down before the Master in token of obedience, thus spoke to Him, 'Thou knowest, O Lord, that I am surrendered to Thee, and that I try my best to be a faithful and pure intermediary of Thy supreme Will'."

If a constant, conscious, dynamic and integral union with the Divine is aimed at as the supreme consummation of spiritual culture, then no part of the human being can be left submerged in inconscience, or subconscience, but all have to be made conscious and autonomous. An unconscious, subconscious or enslaved part cannot certainly unite with the Superconscient Divine. And if a single part is left out of the union, the union remains partial and imperfect, and therefore, to that extent, impeding and unproductive in life.

The above consideration entitles us to the conclusion that the highest perfection of man on earth is an integral autonomy of his being in which all the members, liberated and fully developed, unite, with the soul as their centre, to manifest the Divine in terms of the material life. It is only in this way, by the spiritual union of the autonomous parts of our being, that the integration of the human personality, fumbled after by the empirical psychology of our times, can be effected, and in no other. The secret of autonomy and integration lies in the indwelling Purushas and not in the superficial mechanism of Nature as we mentally perceive it.

RISHABHCHAND

CONSCIOUSNESS AND REALITY*

I

Unless we see that a Consciousness exists within and behind all things, as well as the energising Force which is now believed to be the underlying factor relating all phenomena, it is impossible for us to realise how all this profuse variation and diversity of movements which make up the Cosmos are indeed a harmony possessing their own purposive rhythm. The sameness to which all things ultimately reduce themselves—whether we call it an Æther, or an Energy, or a luminous Oneness—is in fact nothing else but that supreme Consciousness, the transcendent Origin of all entities, acting as a Power, a sustaining, creative, guiding Force. This is even as the ancient Indian sages had discerned the dynamic Supernature to be, a divine creative Power whose essential Nature and expression is a Consciousness-Force. But the ancients had not yet been able to relate this profound Truth with an immediate knowledge of the earth-life, that which (including man himself) has grown and developed through an evolutionary progression. This latter knowledge had to come only centuries later, after man had begun to grapple with the problem of the materiality of his existence. By this time, however, the gap between the ancient revelations and man's growth in worldly knowledge had developed into an almost unbridgeable fissure. Yet we have to see that the ancients had overleaped the truth of earth precisely in order to seize in its pristine purity that ultimate Truth beyond.

This sudden and seemingly miraculous heightening in man's awareness is indeed characteristic of the beginnings of each new phase or cycle in human progress, (as though man at each stage has been given something new, which henceforth he has to bring down to the level of his ordinary life in order to uplift it.) In the whole recorded history of man's cultural growth,—as far as we know from the palæolithic cave drawings, and the various ancient

* "The Life Divine" Volume II, Chapter I (pp. 10-21) 2nd. Edn.

monolithic sculpture works whose origin is otherwise a mystery—we discern this cyclic movement as the underlying pattern of progress. First a luminous revelation or vision appeared which indicated man's awakening to an unseized truth, which seemed occult and symbolical at first, until the reality behind the symbol would be realised. This original vision or revelation became a nucleus around which a new culture or faith could grow. Thus this sudden enlightenment would be inevitably followed by a slower and more laborious process, in which the widespread penetration of the revealed truth would eventually be obscured in the most material level of man's life. We have to see here the meeting of the two cosmic streams, the descent of something from above the evolution, and joining and mingling with it the evolutionary ascent growing upwards, where the higher has apparently become obscured in the lower. We have then the familiar picture of the disintegration and final obliteration of cultures, (though their inner essence lives on to enrich at critical periods the newly rising ones). The stage is then set for a new revelation to come and usher in a new phase, a new direction for man's efforts. We see this more particularly in the present age, which has witnessed the gradual widespread degeneration and sweeping away of all age-long human values. The spread of materialism, nihilism and unbelief has all helped to submerge the ancient universal truths and spiritual riches of the past. It is at this denuded stage that man has become increasingly aware of the gap between the original revelations that erstwhile sustained the race, and his present indecisive knowledge which is consequently so uncertain since it lacks the necessary stable foundation. Hence in order to bridge his present efforts with the past, man has to go back to the very beginnings of the present era of knowledge, that is, to the revelations of the ancient Aryan Seers, which Sri Aurobindo has clearly demonstrated to be the widest basis for this present age of man's higher ascent in knowledge.

From our present standpoint of knowledge, we find three divergent conclusions which man has reached in his attempt to discover what is behind all this cosmic movement. In the first place he has established the fact that a persistence exists at the heart of things—a mechanical determinism which is in reality the basic character of the material nature itself. Secondly he has realised that all is change, that nothing persists and that earth and life are merely the result of chance or random occurrences. This has led him to conclude that all phenomena ultimately resolve themselves into probabilities, and that even our life is the result of a chance

accident. Thirdly he has to some extent, attempted to reconcile these two opposing trends, of Necessity and Chance, by bringing in the principle of eternal recurrence, where persistence as recurrence, is the fundamental pattern of the whole, while change is represented by the movement of a limited vision within that circular orbit. Yet although this cyclic movement introduces a wider law of harmony, it can ultimately only resolve the conflict in the world nature by regarding the latter as an illusion, from which one must completely break away. Fixed to this recurrent circle, one is continually brought back to the point from which one started and therefore the logical aim would then be to overleap this fixity and reach the permanent reality that underlies all change. But we now realise that this pattern of eternal recurrence is but the picture of our own mental being, tied to a fixed point—the ego-centre—around which it is obliged to revolve endlessly. While this seems the pattern of our earthly life, is only so while ever it is dominated and centralised by mind. But if, as a higher vision has revealed to us, we accept a greater entity beyond mind, which is also present in the earth nature (though obscured and embryonic), we have to adjust our views and grasp the true reconciling and all-embracing harmony beyond these three terms of our material, vital and mental existence. From the standpoint of this higher harmonising vision, we are led to realise that persistence, necessity, and mechanical rigidity only appear to be the rule when we observe only the materiality of things. Similarly Chance is the supreme law when we only see the random and indeterminate movements of Life as an all-pervading Force that enters into and instigates all activities. Likewise eternal recurrence is the natural consequence when we regard mind alone as the pre-eminent or ultimate principle, both of the world and our own existence. Clearly we have to take into account that higher overarching Principle, which Sri Aurobindo has shown to exist beyond the highest periphery of mind. This is the Principle of Supermind, which is in fact the divine creative Power that stands above the mental life, and in whose sustaining embrace all the cross-currents of our worldly life have their origin. It is this divine Power that has now to be brought into our life and activity,—or at least the way prepared for its entry therein—if we are to transform our own consciousness and the existence of the world into the very stuff of the divine Reality.

Our consideration of the Supernature compels us to return to the fundamental concept of the Vedantic Seers that a concealed Consciousness dwells within as well as behind all things. We can thus see more logically how

man, a self-conscious being, has been able to emerge out of the inert and apparently inconscient stuff of earth, and how the universe is a harmonious interconnected system, and not a chance formation or a splitting off of worlds. Otherwise we are obliged to oscillate, as we have already seen, between a blind Chance and an inescapable Necessity as the explanation of the universe. But when we speak of Consciousness as the creator and sutainer of the worlds, we cannot mean a Mind even of universal dimensions, (although it is difficult to conceive or speak in mental terms of Something beyond mind). Neither can we mean an extra-cosmic Being with an omniscient Mind and omnipotent Will, (which is but an image projected and magnified of man's ego). These concepts have indeed served their purpose, particularly in moulding man's past religious and philosophic thought and beliefs, but we now see them as a limited framework. They have served their purpose at one stage of man's progressive development, but are not wide enough to form the basis of our present expanding view of the Cosmos, such as modern science has opened up. For we are now realising that it is only man's magnified ego that has rigidly interposed the principle of mind, of which man's own world is composed, as the ultimate reality and origin. When we speak of Consciousness, therefore, we must mean Something beyond mind, of which mind itself is a derivative as well as a proper instrument of it. On this hypothesis we can more readily see that the divine Consciousness is not only the formative Creator, but above all that it has entered and even obscured itself in the very substance of the created world. All is created out of Consciousness, all is upheld and sustained by that, and furthermore the seeds of Consciousness itself form the nuclear core of all substance, and hence it is the guiding principle of the individual growths—whether these be the atoms of matter or the soul-being of man. Behind the action of the material Energy there is a secret involved Consciousness, cosmic and infinite, which builds up through that surface-acting Energy the means of its evolutionary manifestation in a world of obscured Consciousness, the Inconscience, as it is better termed.

It is thus easier to comprehend that this inertness, this utter inconscience of matter we see in the world, had to be the necessary basis and starting-point, if an evolution of Consciousness out of its compressed and widely scattered seeds was (and is) to take place. Only by Consciousness thus submerging itself in the antithesis of its original condition could the re-emergence take place in a new form, embodied in material substance and imbued with life and mind. But as yet man possesses but the partially

emerged Consciousness which is struggling towards the complete consummate conscious Being. What we see at first in the mineral world is a Consciousness that is completely involved in a static inert fixity, a Force that has become highly compressed and immobilised or restricted to an infinitesimal orbit. Only as the evolution progresses do we become aware of Consciousness emerging stage by stage. At first in the small beginnings of life we see the principle of free variation, and the possibilities natural to an infinite creative Consciousness, slowly and gradually attaining a wider freedom. But this freedom, it seems to us, only expresses itself through a blind, circuitous and wasteful process, which really represents, on a time-scale incomprehensible to man, the vast laboratory of Nature's creative progression. It is in fact the expression of an innate unbounded freedom, made possible only by the entry of the original divine Consciousness as the instigating Dynamism of the whole movement. Only when we realise that the underlying Energy, of which all things are seen to be an expression, is indeed a manifestation of the original Consciousness-Force, the guiding and harmonising Power, do we find a logical answer and a harmonious resolution of all the contraries that present themselves to us, whether interpreted as a mechanical Necessity or merely a blind Chance.

It is to be seen, moreover, that our own individual form of consciousness is wholly conditioned by the underlying nature of the world as it is at present. Thus we are not normally aware of the original spiritual substance of things, because cosmic mind has given a seizable form to substance, which the individual can hence utilise. Even the structure of pure matter, whether seen as particles of atoms or as globes of the heavenly bodies, is determined by the overarching dominance of Mind over this lower cosmic Nature. This is seen clearly when our consciousness is raised to the highest periphery of mind—the Overmind—where the clear distinction between the higher and the lower Nature becomes apparent. It is by the light of this higher or divine Nature that we discern the path towards which the cosmic evolution is being directed, and the role of man—the mental being—therein, and particularly of his embryonic soul which is the undying flame of the divine Nature in man. We become aware of this presence more directly when we plunge inwards to the very core of our being and identify ourselves with that inner light. This inner plunge in fact gives us the direct contact with the Divine Reality beyond the phenomenal existence, while the higher ascent along the steps of mind assures us of the untold possibilities in the transformation of man and the earth life, to be attained ultimately by

those very steps. Thus involved in the evolutionary Nature the seed of the Divine Nature struggles to emerge into material form; while above there is the higher Power of the Divine Nature, which is itself pressing down to enter into the terrestrial formation. The transformation of the living substance and individual mind into enlightened channels, can only come through this growing relation of the emerging soul with the divine creative Consciousness. In this relation the higher sphere of mind must necessarily become the intermediary instrument between the embryonic soul enmeshed in the Ignorance of the world, and the supreme Power of the divine Knowledge and Consciousness beyond. By man's increasing surrender and self-opening to this higher Power the individual mentality can become the faithful and light-infused instrument for the activation of soul-power in the world, and thus prepare the ground for the advent of the divine Light to enter and elevate this lower terrestrial Nature.

II

It is clear that because the evolutionary progression is graded from matter to life, from life to mind, and from mind to the spiritual Principle as yet beyond, so man's approach to knowledge must take into account this graded ascent and see clearly the diverse, as well as the particular, laws pertaining to these interacting constituents. Thus an interpretation of Existence wholly from the material standpoint does not, as man is now finding, give any complete solution; neither can Life itself give any decisive guidance, since the life-movement here in the world is as yet blind to its own working and destiny. Although, from the standpoint of mind, there seems at first the hope and possibility that a wider mental knowledge will reach the Truth, yet sooner or later we arrive at the stage when we realise more acutely that mind is not the be-all and end-all of existence, that mind itself is or has to become the instrument of a higher Consciousness. For just as mind has moulded the lower forms of energy—matter and life—into its own modes and forms in the world, so the divine Consciousness entering the evolution will refashion the energies of mind, as well as of life and matter, to express more perfectly the divine Nature and Being. Hence man's surrender to the higher divine Power, the omniscient Knower who is subtly and intimately connected with his being, is the essential condition.

It is when we begin to silence the mind—that is, the superficial movements agitated by life, desire and the egoistic impulse—that we see the

deeper truths of our own nature emerge. For standing back from these superficial movements we can observe the whole working of mind and life in us. We enter then into the silence and detachment of our inner mental being—that which the ancient Indian philosophers called the silent Purusha. But we should discover further that this inner silent witness can also become active as the seeker of the highest truths, and eventually as the regulator and harmoniser of our life, reflecting more and more the higher Knowledge which this inner mind reveals to us. This is our true mental being, the wide universal and plastic instrument which has to displace the narrow superficial centre that persists in falsely identifying itself as the real perceiving Person. But we must note also that the universalised mental being in us is not the whole truth of our personality, though the establishment of its wideness in us is a primary basis for our growing beyond the ego life. The wider mental consciousness, in fact, represents our opening to the higher truths which belong to the spiritual Principle above mind. To reach these truths we have to extend our awareness to the topmost reaches of mind, and see there the wholeness and totality of things in their correct perspective. This global seeing will only become increasingly operative in us as man makes firmer contact with those higher reaches of mind, eventually establishing in humanity itself the Mind of Light, as Sri Aurobindo terms this definitive stage when man can make the Overmind zone manifest inthe world.

By raising our awareness to that wideness and clarity of seeing we begin to discern the secret rhythm and purpose of the world and of our own existence. Above the cross-currents and confusion of our present worldly life, we realise that the origin of both the individual and cosmos lie in the transcendent Reality, whose essence is contained at the core of all things; and above all we begin to realise the significance of the true creative Power of the divine Light, which stands above the overarching cap of Overmind. But even having reached this elevating revelation we have to come back to the fact that our real work lies in the world, for it is here in the ignorance and unknowing of the world's blind struggle, that the light of Truth has to be brought. It is not for us, therefore, to lose ourselves in this higher or even highest realisation. What the Overmind plane shows us is the full extent of the Ignorance—that is, the condition of the lower creation struggling upwards towards the purity and perfection of the divine Truth. It does not possess, however, the redeeming power to bring this Truth into a working relation within our earthly life. This belongs to the divine creative

Power, for whose work in a world overcast by mind, the Overmind is its subtle and light-bearing instrument. It is therefore this creative Power of the Divine, or more precisely Supermind, that has to become the ruling Force in the world, not merely as the Consciousness-Force acting from behind the veil, but as the manifest Reality in the earth life. And for this accomplishment Overmind acts as the frontier zone, both guarding the Ignorance and giving access to the divine Reality yet to come. But first and foremost, owing to the insufficiency of Mind itself (even to Overmind), it is necessary that the light of the soul or psychic being that is latent and embryonic in man, should emerge as an active principle in the evolution. Without this decisive development mind's opening cannot bring down the higher truths beyond as a permanent Reality in the earth nature.

Let us therefore re-state the two parts of our endeavour; on the one hand the clarifying and opening of mind to the higher truths, and on the other the bringing into action of the soul's perception and direct contact with the Divine. For the former achievement our study of Sri Aurobindo's revelations in "The Life Divine" forms the widest and completest basis. But it is the soul's direct contact with the Divine and a bringing of its light increasingly into our daily activity that is the essential condition. And reciprocally the soul grows through the mind's increasing contact with the divine Light, which is brought closer to us through our seizing these revelations of "The Life Divine".

The incapacity of mind is most clearly experienced when we try to conceive the reality of the Absolute. When we call the Absolute an Indeterminable we fail to realise that this negative concept merely represents our inability to conceive the Wholeness of it. First we have to see that the Absolute is capable of its own infinite self-determination. By gradually broadening our standpoint of perception we are eventually able to identify ourselves with the Highest,—the Divine Reality itself. And by centering our vision on that divine Origin which is the true Absolute harbouring the supramental Truth-consciousness, we perceive the occult way of breaking through the Ignorance in which mind is enmeshed. That which was seen by the ancient Seers as a Light, a Truth, a Power beyond this nether world of Unknowing is now revealed more clearly and precisely by Sri Aurobindo to be the pure divine creative Power, whose descent alone can liberate the world from its state of darkness and division. Overmind is its paramount instrument in this creative process, being directly attached to its higher Source, as well as intimately connected with the evolving worlds of mind,

life and matter which are growing upwards out of a sunken consciousness. The role of Overmind, we might say, is that of Lord of this lower hemisphere; and its action is centred on a fundamental duality which is the basis of all this division and fragmentation of the world. Supermind, on the other hand, is the divine Power, and is the Lord of all Cosmos—both of the lower and the higher hemispheres. It holds in the Oneness of its all-encompassing embrace both the Perfection of the Divine Nature, and the Ignorance and Division of the lower evolving Nature. If therefore we seek a heaven compounded of the divine Purity and Perfection itself, not as a sanctuary of escape beyond cosmic action but as the integral possession of the world, then it can only be by the descent of Supermind into the earth nature that our ultimate aspiration and the highest aim of our endeavour can be fulfilled. For mind,as we have realised, is not the end-product of our earthly evolution. There is a higher goal to which the religions of all times have pointed,—but it is only through the true Divine guidance that we are able to see the way of its coming into the world.

The secret of this divine transformation lies essentially in our own preparation for the divine Descent, and this means more particularly for man the proper cultivation of mind into a purified, calm, discriminative and light-responsive instrument. This cultivation not only reveals the goal more clearly, but little by little removes obstructions and interferences that inevitably arise through the obscured working of mind, wholly immersed as it is in the blind flux of the upward-struggling Nature. It is by this constant integral process that we become more and more detached from the ego's grasp, which is indeed the central core of resistance in man against the emergence of soul in the evolution, and the advent of the Divine Power in the world.

N. Pearson

SOCIAL TENSIONS AND CONFLICTS

TENSIONS and conflicts between racial and national societies or sub-groups within them are at the last instance, undoubtedly, always due to psychological reasons i.e. motivations and attitudes, conscious or unconscious, of certain kinds, even though the professed difficulties are almost always affirmed and believed to be objective. Even when economic exploitation, the too evident inequality between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', is affirmed as the reason of conflict between capital and labour, the real reason is the psycho-biological feeling of want, dissatisfaction, frustration, etc., which are caused by or related to the above objective conditions, but which surely cannot be identified with them. That this should be so, is intelligible for the reason that the tensions and conflicts, after all, relate to groups of psycho-vital individuals. The essential fact of importance is, therefore, the nature of man and the possibilities of its modification. If this be so then the causes of social tensions and conflicts have to be essentially sought and found in the nature of our normal individual and social mind or consciousness. Now an examination of our mental nature shows a fundamental trait, which Indian psychology has called *Bahirmukhtā* (outward-directedness). Western psychology has lately discovered an equivalent term 'Projection', which however, is used to describe a piece of abnormal behaviour and not affirm a general truth of our nature. This trait seems to play a major part in our social misunderstandings and conflicts, since the attribution of the responsibility of our trouble to another or others is obviously the beginning of the matter. The yoga of Indian psychology, which has dared to look deeply within affirms that this *Bahirmukhtā*, outward-directedness of our nature, blinds us to seeing that the causes of what happens to us lie within us. Sri Aurobindo, who is a most systematic exponent of yoga, affirms categorically that "nothing can endure if it has not a will in our nature, a sanction of the Purusha, a sustained pleasure in some part of the being, even though it be a secret or a perverse pleasure, to keep it in continuance".[1] Psycho-analysis, which

[1] The Life Divine, (American edition), p. 353

too has dared to probe into the deeper workings of human nature, has affirmed the same truth, within its psychiatric reference, that "the causes of mental disorders are endogenic."

Now an attitude, whether in the individual or a social group, which is inclined, at any rate at the first instance, to examine itself for the causes of its difficulty and seek to correct itself, so far as it can, would be the most important single factor for the resolution of a social tension and conflict. However, on the preventive side, which would naturally be more important, what is needed is the reorientation and reconstruction of human culture on the basis of above-mentioned verified and verifiable truth of yoga, which has now also been recognised by western psychology. However this attempt would only be the first step in the right direction and it will need to be followed up by other appropriate steps leading to a progressive modification of the egoistic impulses into a more universalistic form, which is able to recognise and pursue common good more spontaneously.

This approach is not necessarily opposed to the statistical and allied investigations of the facts of social tensions and conflicts, but according to it their value will consist in the measure they are able to afford some self-knowledge to the social groups concerned and help the growth of the attitude of seeking the causes of difficulties in our nature and attempting a remedy there.

It is, however, opposed to a standpoint of psychology which regards man as a creature of circumstances, denies it an essential independent existence and, therefore, seeks to find a solution of the problems of man in the organisation of his circumstances. Undoubtedly a good part of man's nature is dependent on his external situation and some part of it is bound to remain so at a better cultural level too. Yet the solution of his problems lies in the resolution of his inner conflicts and the harmonisation of his own being. On the whole, the objective situation is the stage and material for the progressive improvement of the essential quality of human life.

(This is the summary of a stand-point represented at a discussion on the subject at the Indian Science Congress.)

INDRA SEN

POETIC INSPIRATION

MANY poets have recognised an invisible mysterious source of inspiration beyond their conscious mind but they could not exactly understand its nature. The only thing about which they were certain was that whatever came from this profounder region of their being was natural and superior in insight to the one produced by the conscious mind. Thus Myers observes: "Genius should be regarded as a power of utilising a wider range than other men can utilize of faculties in some degree innate, in all; so that an 'inspiration of genius' will be in truth a subliminal uprush, an emergence into the current of ideas which the man is consciously manipulating...." Shelley wrote, "Poetry is created by that imperial faculty whose throne is curtained within the invisible nature of man." Lowell (in Columbus) speaks of some central deep from which the poets write:

> "And I believe the poets; it is they
> Who utter wisdom from the central deep.
> And listening to the inner flow of things
> Speak to the age out of eternity."

Carlyle distinguishes the thinking of the conscious surface mind which he calls artificial from the creation of the 'quiet mysterious depths' of the unconscious which he calls the natural. He writes thus, "Of our thinking, we might say, it is but the mere upper surface that we shape into articulate thought; underneath the region of argument and conscious discourse, lies the region of meditation; here in its quiet mysterious depths, dwells what vital force is in us; here, if aught is to be created and not merely manufactured and communicated must the work go on. Manufacture is intelligible but trivial; creation is great, and cannot be understood. Thus if the debater and demonstrator whom we may rank as the lowest of true thinkers, knows what he has done and how he did it, the artist whom we rank as the highest, knows not; must speak of inspiration, and in one or the other dialect

call his work the gift of divinity." (Essays—Characteristics) Again Wordsworth in the following lines of Prelude—Book 2 points out the poor nature of the product of conscious thought:

> "That false secondary power
> By which we multiply distinctions, then
> Seem that our puny boundaries are things
> That we perceive and not that we have made, and on its product
> Science as a makeshift. Not as our glory and our absolute boast,
> But as a succedaneium, and a prop
> To our infirmity."

The attempts made by psycho-analysis in literature to fathom the 'quiet mysterious depths' of poetic inspiration also fail to satisfy us for they have dismissed it by calling it the unconscious mind. Thus Presscott in his book, 'The poetic mind' identifies the muse with the unconscious mind. He writes, "Invocation to the muse is only a solicitation of the unconscious mind." He explains all visions of the invisible world as materials derived from the unconscious source. About Poe's idea of supernal beauty he observes, "When Poe for example says that beauty not that of reality but a supernal beauty is the end of poetical creation, he doubtless has in mind a quality belonging to material derived from this unconscious source." He holds that material comes from both the conscious and unconscious source. But it is mainly the latter "which gives to poetry its peculiar and inexplicable character." A poet utilises mainly the material furnished by the unconscious. He thus defined the unconscious mind, "it means a part of mind which cannot be utilized or controlled voluntarily and whose content cannot be recovered by the memory in voluntary thought—which however does apparently often carry on a part of the operation in the second mode of thought, and whose content is drawn upon in that thought. It is important especially in furnishing material for poetry—as also for dreams and other productions of the imagination."

The entire account is clouded in the mists of the unconscious. It fails to grip our understanding and only serves to point out the need of a new psychology of poetic creation founded upon a deeper insight of living experience. Such a psychology is provided by the poetic eye of Sri Aurobindo who far from calling it the unconscious source writes about those planes of creation as if they are native to his consciousness and holds that great poetry

can be written only by being perfectly conscious of the so-called mysterious planes from which the inspiration comes. He calls it not the unconscious but the superconscient source. Moreover he has exactly defined the various levels of the so-called unconscious source and has not summarily comprehended them all in one word (superconscient). His masterly analysis of the entire psychology of poetic creation is something unparallelled in the history of literary criticism. Never before has any critic exceeded even the unfailing exactitude of the probing surgeon's knife as Sri Aurobindo in the examination of the most profound subtleties of a poet's 'quiet mysterious depths'. He has gone to the very fount of creation, the planes from which the inspiration flows and is not tied down merely to the inner nature of the poet.

He thus points out the inadequacy of all such accounts in *Future Poetry* (Chapter—'Recent English Poetry' 3), "We take little account of the psychology of poetic genius and are content with saying that the word of the poet is the speech of the imagination or that he works by an inspiration. But this is an insufficient account; for imagination is of many different kinds and inspiration touches the mind at different levels and breaks out through different media before it issues through the gates of the creative imagination. What we mean by inspiration is that the impetus to poetic creation and utterance comes to us from a superconscient source above the ordinary mentality, so that what is written seems not to be the fabrication of the brain-mind, but something more sovereign breathed or poured in from above. That is the possession by the divine enthousiasmos of which Plato has spoken."

What is still more remarkable is the wonderful discriminative insight with which he distinguishes one verse from another by assigning to them their distinct levels of inspiration. Thus of the following lines of Wordsworth

> "The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
> No more shall grief of mine the seasons wrong;
> I hear the echoes through the mountains throng;
> The winds come to me from the fields of sleep."

he writes, "it is precisely the overmind movement that is wanting; in the last line there is something of the overmind substance expressed not directly but through the highest intuitive consciousness, and because it is not direct the overmind rhythm is absent."

"As for the overmind rhythm and inspiration we get nearer to it in another line of Wordsworth, but I do not remember it exactly and I may misquote,—

'And marble face, the index of a mind
Voyaging through strange seas of thought'

or a line like Milton's

'These thoughts that wander through eternity.'
(*A letter to Amal Kiran*)

Shelley's poetry he characterises mainly as of psychic inspiration but there is nothing in it of the overhead note. Thus of his famous stanza:

We look before and after
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those
That tell of saddest thought

he writes, "This is perfect poetry with the most exquisite melody and beauty of wording and an unsurpassable poignancy of pathos, but there is no touch or note of the overhead inspiration: it is the mind and the heart, the vital emotion, working at their highest pitch under the stress of a psychic inspiration. The rhythm is of the same character, a direct, straightforward, lucid and lucent movement welling out limpidly straight from the psychic source." (Mystic Poetry—Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual No. 5) At another place, in a letter to Sri Dilip Kumar Roy quoted by him in his book 'Anami', he writes of his other lines:—

I can give not what men call love,
But will thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above
And the Heavens reject not,—
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,—
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow?

after bringing out their full suggestive meaning, "Of course all that is not said, but only suggested; but it is obviously the spirit of the poem, and it is this spirit in it that made me write to Amal the other day that it would be perhaps impossible to find in English literature a more perfect example of psychic inspiration than those eight lines you have translated..."

One cannot conceive of any critic ancient or modern who has understood the spirit of a few lines or passages of a poem to such an extent as to go to the length of tracing their very source to particular chamber of the muse or the level of inspiration in which they were created.

It is with the same keen vision of a seer-critic that he examines the psychology of Milton's poetry which is ordinarily spoken of as the best example of sublimity in English poetry, but Sri Aurobindo is not content with such a vague general turn which hardly takes us very far. He holds that it is a mistake to characterise his poetry as having the overhead complexion. "In mental poetry", he writes, "there are derivations or substitutes for the manner of the Higher thought. It is easy for the mind to mistake and take the higher for the lower inspiration or vice versa. Thus Milton's lines

> 'Of man's first disobedience
> And the fruit of that forbidden tree'

or

> 'On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues'

might at first sight be taken because of a certain depth of emotion in their large lingering rhythm as having the overhead complexion, but this rhythm loses something of its sovereign right because there are no depths of sense behind it. It conveys nothing but the noble and dignified pathos of the blindness and old age of a greater personality fallen into evil days. Milton's architecture of thought and verse is high and powerful and massive, but there are usually no subtle echoes there, no deep chambers: the occult things in men's being are foreign to his intelligence—for it is in the light of the poetic intelligence that he works. He does not stray into 'the mystic cavern of the heart', does not follow the inner fire entering like a thief with the cow of Light into the secret of secrecies." (Mystic Poetry—Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual—No. 5) Thus according to Sri Aurobindo Milton's Paradise Lost in spite of its mighty amplitude of epic expression and sublimity is mainly an intellectual thought-utterance which though poetic should not be mistaken for any high level of poetic inspiration. In

'Future Poetry' (The Course of English Poetry 4) he thus writes, "he has given English poetic speech a language of intellectual thought which is of itself highly poetic without depending in the least on any of the formal aids of poetic expression except those which are always essential and indispensable, a speech which is in its very grain poetry and in its very grain intellectual thought-utterance."

Shakespeare's inspiration he characterises as of the life soul though in certain individual lines he attains the level of the illumined mind. He thus observes, "Shakespeare's poetry coruscates with a play of the hues of imagination which we may regard as a mental substitute for the inspiration of the illumined mind and sometimes by aiming at an exalted note he links on to the illumined overhead inspiration itself as in the lines:—

> 'Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
> Seal up the shipboy's eyes and rock his brains
> In cradle of the rude imperious surge?'

Unlike Milton, Shakespeare does sometimes get into "the mystic Cavern of the heart", the deep chambers of man's being, as if by a splendid psychic accident in spite of his preoccupation with the colours and shows of life." (Mystic Poetry—Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual No. 5)

LATE JAGADISH SARAN

REVIEW

Japasutram by *Srimad Swami Pratyagananda Saraswati*. Part I Rs. 4/- Part II Rs. 5/-. Published by Mahesha Library 2/1, Shyama Charan De Street, College Square, Calcutta.

Japa or recitation of words or sounds which have special potency has been regarded as a great aid to spiritual sadhana in all countries and all ages, but nowhere has it been turned to such a scientific and efficient means as in the Tantric system of India. But though it is practised widely, its mystery is not generally known and it is more often than not practised blindly and mechanically with no result. The book under review has gone a long way in removing this veil and showing the true nature of japa and the secret of its efficiency. The former name of the author was Professor Pramathanath Mukherjee and he was a co-worker of Sri Aurobindo in the field of education. In research work in the great system of Tantric sadhana his co-operation with the late Sir John Woodroffe is well-known. He wrote many articles and books on Veda and Tantra and philosophy, but he has poured all his knowledge and spiritual experience into this work, his *magnum opus*. The main book is written in Sanskrit verses; like the famous Vedanta Sutras it has four chapters, and each chapter has four sections. The book is vast and only the first two parts have been published which however enable the readers to understand the main principles of Tantric sadhana and realise that behind all the symbols and rites of the Hindu religion there are deep spiritual truths. Sri Aurobindo said about the Hindu religion in his famous Uttarpara Speech, "This is the one religion that can triumph over materialism by including and anticipating the discoveries of science and the speculations of philosophy." The truth of this great saying has been proved in this book in detail. The author himself has prepared a Sanskrit commentary on his Sutras and translated it into Bengali. In all there are more than five hundred Sutras and the elucidating verses are about two thousand in number. Most of the technical terms we find in Indian piritual books have been explained here, and in this way the

book has greatly enriched the Bengali language by providing apt words for scientific and philosophical concepts. This is possible only for a man of his vast erudition and life-long spiritual sadhana.

In the beginning there was the Word, says the Bible. Thus sound is the beginning of all creation, and it follows that a proper manipulation of sound values can be utilised for all creative activities. Their efficiency in music and poetry is well-known. Not only the significance of the words, but the sound vibrations contribute to the *rasa* or ananda as well as the illumination which these arts bring to us. When properly used, sound vibrations help us to rise to a higher state of being and consciousness; thus the Upanishad defines japa as *abhyāroha* or a means of ascent. The Gita says that of all *yajnas* or sacrifices the Divine is most manifest in japa, *yajñānām japa-yajño'smi*.

Materialism in its modern form, which arose with the phenomenal advance of Natural Science in the nineteenth century, is on the wane. People everywhere are realising more and more that there is no other solution of the persisting ills of human life than the spiritual. Still there are two great obstacles to the advent of the true spiritual age. On the one hand, the scientific attitude has made men sceptic, and though it is useful in uprooting prejudices and superstitions, it engenders a general habit of doubting spiritual values, specially among the Intelligentia. On the other hand, those who have faith in spirituality regard mechanical performance of rites and ceremonies and the following of some mental and moral rules and dogmas as the whole of spirituality. Swamiji's book, it is expected, will help largely in removing both these obstacles. People will understand the inner meaning and significance of symbols and images and profit by using them more intelligently. Also the sceptics will see that the tenets of Hinduism are not mere dogmas or blind beliefs, they are at least as much tested truths as the findings of Science. Not only that, when properly understood, they even throw light on problems which are baffling modern scientists.

Everything in the world, says the author, can be considered in three aspects—*Kriyā* (Action), *ākriti* (Pattern), *daivata* (Power). For example, I am seeing an object. The seeing is an action. The special organ by which I am seeing in a definite way is the Pattern. And the power of consciousness which is presiding over the whole action is the *daivata* (in this case, Aditya, the presiding deity of vision). It is the latter of which material science does not take any account—it has no means of seeing that behind

everything and every action in the world there is a presiding diety. The animism of the primitive people has an underlying truth which they saw darkly. Take the case of Radium, its atoms burst spontaneously, this is Action. The arrangement inside and outside the atom an account of which this bursting takes place giving rise to *alpha*, *beeta* and *gama* rays constitute the Pattern. But how this bursting takes place without any external cause such as pressure or heat, science is unable to explain. The Tantric system will attribute it to the third element, the Power or *daivata*, the presiding deity. By practising *japa* in the proper manner one can come into direct contact with this deity—it is in this manner that Tantrics can exercise a control over external things and events which is beyond the scope of science. Here is a field of experiment, and those who sincerely seek to know the truth should follow the Tantric discipline and test for themselves its claims which, if established, will widen the power of man over Nature far beyond what has yet been accomplished by Science. "But here also," says Sri Aurobindo, "the latest trend is highly significant of a freer future. As the outposts of Scientific Knowledge come more and more to be set on the borders that divide the material from the immaterial, so also the highest achievements of practical Science are those which tend to simplify and reduce to the vanishing point the machinery by which the greatest effects are produced. Wireless telegraphy is Nature's exterior sign and pretext for a new orientation. The sensible physical means for the intermediate transmission of the physical force is removed. It is only preserved at the points of impulsion and reception. Eventually even these must disappear; for when the laws and forces of the supraphysical are studied with the right starting point, the means will infallibly be found for Mind directly to seize on the physical energy and speed it accurately upon its errand. There, once we bring ourselves to recognise it, lie the gates that open upon the enormous vistas of the future." (*The Life Divine*, Vol. I, ch. II)

That it is not a mere fancy to expect distant transmission of sounds and messages without the aid of transmitting or receiving sets appears from a consideration of the very nature of Sound. As this deep and subtle knowledge lies at the basis of the practice of japa, we shall give here an abridged translation of what Swamiji has said about it in an introductory essay given at the beginning of the book.

"The Science of japa is essentially a spiritual Science. It has been said that there are three accessories for japa—*vak* (speech), *prana* (vital), *mana* (mind). The action of japa is not performed disregarding the material

body. Thus what we regard as gross is the first standing ground of japa. The laws of this material body are therefore not irrelevant to this first stepping place of japa. Japa also requires a special function of the vital force, and in that function there must be symmetry and harmony, just as this is indispensable in music. Unless there is the harmony, the action of japa will not be effective. Take the word *Kriṣṇa*; if it be pronounced as Krisna, as many people do, the dental s and the dental n will not be symmetrical with the guttural *ka* and also with *ṣ* and *ṇ*, and thus instead of harmonic function, there will be disordant function.

Japa and for that matter any other action requires these three things for its efficacy—(1) *Vidya* (correct technique), (2) *Sraddha* (starting from working belief and interest) and (3) *upanisat* (grasp of basic principles). For correct technique or *vidya* we must take the help of Science, and in this respect we cannot ignore the expert knowledge of physical, biological and mental Science. As a matter of fact, science is science whether it be physical or spiritual, and it is wrong to erect an insurmountable wall between the two. Of course only spiritual science can claim to be perfect, but it has to reach this perfection by taking up the knowledge given by the other sciences and integrating them. Japa, taken, as here, in the wider science no doubt belongs to spiritual science, but in many respects it has to obey the laws discovered by the physical sciences. For that the sadhaka of japa need not go to a physical laboratory just as a violinist need not do so—but they have to depend on the knowledge discovered in such laboratories. Of course in spiritual matters the main thing is the deeper flow of power from the spirit or soul, but the surface and external things also cannot be ignored—the entire being of the *jiva* has to be taken into account.

We find in the Veda that this creation comes from sound, that sound is the origin of this universe. What sort of sound is this? Is it the same sound as we hear by our ear? The sound we hear by our ear depends on several things. First, there must be some disturbance somewhere in the atmosphere. It is something like the ripples created in water when a stone is thrown into it. That disturbance extending like waves has to strike our ear, our auditory nerves and some parts of the brain before our consciousness responds to it and we hear the sound. Again, if the disturbance is too strong or too weak we do not hear any sound. There is a lower limit and an upper limit to the rate of vibration, and unless the vibrations of the air are within these two limits we generally do not hear any sound. Yet as the existence of ultra-violet and infra-red rays outside the range of our vision is proved

by science, so the existence also of vibrations beyond audible sounds is proved, and supersonics and ultrasonics are making research in those phenomena. In the formation and dissolution of chemical compounds, in the breaking of atoms, in the control of the subtle activities of the body and the mind, the influence of these subtle vibrations is being increasingly admitted. We cannot hear a sound unless a vibration is carried by the medium of air and strikes our auditory organ and reaches the brain cells. Beside this there is the factor of attention—we do not hear a sound unless our mind is turned towards it.

This rough account of the phenomena of sound shows that the ordinary sound cannot be regarded as the origin of creation. For such sound requires a vibration in air, but where is air before creation? Such sound requires auditory organs and the brain which are non-existent before creation. There is also no mind to pay attention. What we experience as sound came after creation, not before it. What is at the beginning of creation can be called a "primordial causal movement". From that primal source issue various "lines or streams of effectual manifestation" in various directions. All the forms we see, the sounds we hear, the taste, smell and touch we experience, all the joy and sorrow we feel—are different streams of such manifestation. What was before this primal vibration, whether or how it arose in an infinite silence and immobility, we need not discuss here. It is sufficient to understand that at the source of all our experience is a vibration, *spanda*, *cāñcalya*, stressing. The resultant manifestation of this stressing in my consciousness constitutes my knowledge of things. This applies equally to all such manifestations as light, heat, sound. The atoms of some object are vibrating restlessly; ether or some such subtle medium carries that and excites my sense-organs; the response of my consciousness to that stimulus constitutes my experience of heat. We need not have any doubt that at the source of all sense-experience, there is a stir, an agitation.

But apart from the way how we know or feel an object, what is the object in itself? Take this watch, it looks like a solid and stable thing, but at this moment I can break it to pieces, those pieces can be still further divided. So far as chemistry is concerned we stop at the atom which is regarded as indivisible. But that also is not really indivisible, science says that an atom is made up of electrical particles, such as electrons; an atom has a very complicated structure, it is a solar system in miniature. So there is no rest anywhere, movements are going on inside the atom as in the bigger world outside. Where is the end of this activity? What is there inside an electron?

Science, even some time ago, dared not conceive anything about it, but wave mechanics has shown that electron is not the last word in the formation of matter. Indeed in explaining the structure of matter, science is using mathematical concepts which are nothing more than symbols or a convenient or conventional way of describing the phenomena observed. This much is certain that at the beginning of creation we arrive at a *spanda*, a vibration or stressing. Let us designate this spanda as *paraśabda*, whether we hear that as sound or not; what we hear can be called *aparaśabda* or *dhvani*. There is difference in the capacity of hearing among individuals; certain animals can hear sounds inaudible to human beings. With the help of instruments like megaphone, microphone we can perhaps hear the movements of an ant's feet. If there be any truth in the spiritual science of the Hindus, a person by practising *samyama* can hear the subtlest of the subtle sounds, even the movements of electrons may not be altogether inaudible. Thus the capacity of hearing is relative, variable and conditional. The sound we ordinarily hear may be called *sthūla śabda*, gross sound. The sound that can be heard with the help of instruments or by the development of yogic powers may be called *sūkṣma śabda*, subtle sound. But instruments are not perfect, yogic powers may have defects—so the question arises, is their any condition in which hearing is absolute and perfect? Following the analogy of mathematics we can assert that there is such a condition where the soul can hear a spanda or vibration without the help of any instrument or organ. Such a capacity of hearing may be termed Absolute ear. Not only hearing, we can conceive also Absolute eye, Absolute tongue and so forth. These may not be gross things like the eye, tongue etc., they signify limits of a particular capacity. By the Absolute Ear we get sound as it is which is known in Indian philosophy as *śabda tanmātra*.

* * *

"All things in the world are centres of a play of forces, everything has at its basis a causal stress. The vibration of this basic stress of a thing as heard by the Absolute ear is its natural name or *Vīja*mantra. Such a *vīja-mantra* has the power to create the object of which it is the natural name. This is the principle underlying all practice of japa. Take for example fire, we have no absolute ear to hear its original vibration, but by the yogic ear it is heard as *ram*. Our recitation of these mantras is not pure, there-

fore their power is dormant. By *puraścaran* and other Tantric processes, this power can be awakened, and then actual fire can be produced by the recitation of *ram*. This is not a matter of blind belief, we point here to a field of experiment, like any other field of scientific experiment. Science has gained much control over forces of Nature, but that control has not reached its highest limit. Indian Yoga is an attempt in that direction. If one can attain the Absolute Ear or very near it, it will not be impossible to dispense with transmitting and receiving sets for hearing or seeing sounds and sights from any distance."

We have already said that there is hardly any symbol or image in Hindu religion for the true significance of which the author has not given a clue; he has, for instance, interpreted the rat of Ganapati and even the crow sitting on the chariot of *Dhūmāvatī*. A question arises why the ancient Rishis and sadhakas clothed deep spiritual truths in such enigmatical symbols which sometimes appear to be grotesque and even obscene. The answer is that these truths are not at once obvious because they were the result of long psychological experiment and profound internal experience. "Therefore without a long inner experience, without intimate self-observation and intuitive perception of the Nature-forces it is difficult to grasp accurately or firmly utilise them." The symbols would be easily understood by persons who follow the spiritual path and undergo some discipline. Modern Science also is following the same path, it is using symbols (mathematical in this case) to express its highest truths such as the spherical Universe, space-Time Continuum, etc. which are absolutely unintelligible to the man in the street, but are of engrossing interest to a Science student.

It is often said that the Vedic sadhana was replaced by the Tantric as being more suitable to the people of Kaliyuga. Our author says that this does not mean any diminution or dilution to suit weaker people. It only means that humanity is progressing and as it is nearing the goal, the prospect becomes more clear and the steps can be more quickened. Following the same argument we can say that we of the modern age have outgrown even the Tantra and require a newer synthesis to arrive at the final achievement for which humanity has been preparing through ages with various means and methods. In this connection we can quote here what Sri Aurobindo said in the first chapter of his *Essays on the Gita*:

"There is yet another, the Tantric, which though less subtle and spiritually profound, is even more bold and forceful than the synthesis of the Gita,—for it seizes even upon the obstacles to the spiritual life and compels

them to become the means for a richer spiritual conquest and enables us to embrace the whole of Life in our divine scope as the Lila of the Divine; and in some directions it is more immediately rich and fruitful, for it brings forward into the foreground along with divine knowledge, divine works and an enriched devotion of divine Love, the secrets also of the Hatha and Raja Yogas, the use of the body and of mental askesis for the opening up of the divine life on all its planes, to which the Gita gives only a passing and perfunctory attention. Moreover it grasps at the idea of the divine perfectibility of man, possessed by the Vedic Rishis but thrown into the background by the intermediate ages, which is destined to fill so large a place in any future synthesis of human thought, experience and aspiration.

We of the coming day stand at the head of a new age of development which must lead to such a new and larger synthesis. We are not called upon to be orthodox Vedantins of any of the three schools or Tantrics or to adhere to one of the theistic religious of the past or to entrench ourselves within the four corners of the teaching of the Gita. That would be to limit ourselves and to attempt to create our spiritual life out of the being, knowledge and nature of others, of the men of the past, instead of building it out of our own being and potentialities. We do not belong to the past dawns, but to the noons of the future. A mass of new material is flowing into us; we have not only to assimilate the influences of the great theistic religions of India and of the world and a recovered sense of the meaning of Buddhism, but to take full account of the potent though limited revelations of modern knowledge and seeking; and, beyond that, the remote and dateless past which seemed to be dead is returning upon us with an effulgence of many luminous secrets long lost to the consciousness of mankind but now breaking out again from behind the veil. All this points to a new, a very rich, a very vast synthesis; a fresh and widely embracing harmonisation of our gains is both an intellectual and a spiritual necessity of the future."

A. B.

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